AN

ESSAY

ON

Mr. *Pope*'s ODYSSEY.

IN

FIVE DIALOGUES.

By the Revd. Mr. SPENCE.

——Each finding, like a friend,
Something to blame, and something to commend.
Mr. *Pope*'s *Miscel.* Vol. I.

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GR. III.
BR. MUS.

THE PREFACE.

THERE is no perſon more odious than the man who makes himſelf greatly eminent. It is a ſort of tacit reproach on the reſt of the ſpecies; and every one feels his own meanneſs the more ſenſibly, when he looks towards thoſe exalted genius's, who have gained a ſuperiority over the reſt of mankind. This may make it obvious to imagine, that the following dialogues are partly deſigned as invectives; and produced chiefly from that blindneſs in ſelf-love, which makes men willing to derogate from every one, who has merit enough to provoke, and fame enough to make others think themſelves leſſen'd by the overgrowth of his character.

Tho' this reaſoning be exceedingly true in general, it ought to be conſidered, at the

ſame time, that any diſlike to the eminence of others naturally ariſes, only among ſuch perſons, as are got into the ſame paths of fame. The gentlemen of the ſword cannot bear to have others riſe over their head; the men of genius look maliciouſly on a prevailing poet: but Pope, I preſume, never envied Marlborough the battle of Blenheim, any more than that hero envied him his tranſlation of the Iliad.

'Tis for this reaſon I might almoſt ſay, that I cannot envy Mr. Pope. So far at leaſt I am unbiaſſed; I can hear the applauſes, which are given that great man; I can admire the paſſages, which contribute to the deſerving them: but I cannot be uneaſy at thoſe, or detract from theſe out of any prejudices ariſing from this paſſion. Give me leave to ſay farther, that in reading that work of his, which occaſioned this Eſſay, no one could be more delighted, than I was, in ſeveral parts of it. Many beauties I ſaw in it; and I imagined I ſaw ſome faults. In ſome particular converſations on this head, I have found myſelf indifferent in the caſe: and now I have here flung the thoughts on both together, I hope, with ſome degree of impartiality. But if ſome things ſhould be blamed without ſufficient reaſon, or others commended too highly,

and

and in a manner diſproportioned to what they deſerve, I ſubmit each to the many better judges, who may happen to meet with theſe ſheets. I aſk pardon for any errors in them: I beg to be ſet right.

Prefaces, I think, are the only places in which a man may be allowed to talk freely of that worſt of ſubjects, himſelf: I hope no body will deny one the uſe of ſo aukward a privilege; and ſhall therefore go on without any farther apologies.

To many it may perhaps ſeem arrogant to find fault at all with ſo diſtinguiſht and ſo noble a Poet as Mr. Pope. Indeed here are ſome things propoſed as faulty from his tranſlation; but they are only propoſed: the world is to judge of them. Where I have been miſtaken in any of theſe points, it is not for want of a due deference to the merits of this writer; but from a ſhortneſs of my own ſight. On the contrary, if any ſuch criticiſms happen ſometimes to be right, the eminence of the poet will be ſo far from being a reaſon againſt them, that it makes any true cautions the more proper, and in ſome ſenſe perfectly neceſſary.

Beſides: the learned world, as I take it, have ever allowed a liberty of thinking and of ſpeaking one's ſentiments. That

ſerene republick knows none of the diſtance and diſtinctions which cuſtom has introduced into all others. There is a decent familiarity to be admitted between the greateſt and the meaneſt perſon in it. This has often raiſed a thought in me, which has ſomething wild, and at the ſame time, ſomething very agreeable in it, when indulged to any degree. 'Tis in relation to the peculiar happineſs of men of letters; in that they can ſit down in their cloſets, and converſe with the greateſt writers of every age, or of any nation; and that in as much freedom and intimacy, as their neareſt friends could ever uſe toward any of them when living. What an illuſtrious aſſembly is there on thoſe ſhelves? the courts of Auguſtus, Lewis the fourteenth, or Charles the ſecond, never beheld ſuch a frequency of great genius's, as ſtand round a man in his own private ſtudy. How large an happineſs is it for a perſon to have it in his power to ſay at any time, that he is going to ſpend the afternoon with the moſt agreeable and moſt improving company, he will chuſe out of all ages? If he is in a gay humour, perhaps with Horace and Anacreon, and Lord Dorſet; or if more ſolid, either with Plato, Mr. Locke, or Sir Iſaac Newton.

'Tis

'Tis this eaſe of acceſs, and the liberty ariſing from it, which conſtitute and preſerve the felicity of the republick of letters. The meaner ſort, which compoſe it, are all free-voters; and may ſpeak their real opinion without reſerve: at the ſame time the characters even of the greateſt and firſt men in it, muſt be form'd and eſtabliſh'd on this openneſs of judging, and that freedom of obſervation.

But waving whatever has been ſaid of this liberty in the learned world, moſt people will be apt to help one to an excuſe of another kind: for moſt, I think, are very ready to agree, that Mr. Pope is only the maſter-hand in this tranſlation. Be that as it will, Mr. Pope has recommended the whole with his name; he gives the finiſhing ſtroke to every thing; and the dialogues ſpeak of him, as if he were really the author of the whole. It would have been a confuſed thing, and often not practicable, to have ſpoken at every turn to the right perſon. This has occaſioned ſeveral applauſes of the poet, which may ſeem too high for a ſtranger: but there is ſo good reaſon to think, that the other gentlemen engaged are perſons of eſtabliſht characters in the poetick world; that after all, thoſe compliments perhaps may ſtill be allowed to

ſtand as they are. I hope they are never wrought too high for Mr. Pope himſelf; and I believe they may generally be ſpoken very juſtly of his ſeconds in the work.

One word more, and I have done. As to the manner of theſe Dialogues; 'tis the old Platonick way, which Cicero brought from Greece, and uſed ſo happily in the Latin tongue. It has had its ſucceſſes too among the moderns: Fontenelle will always be read with the greateſt pleaſure, where he has followed it; that writer is peculiarly happy in all his dialogues, of whatever ſort; and, in general, may be ſaid to talk as well with pen and ink, as any man in the world. Mr. Dryden and Mr. Addiſon have recommended it among us by their example. Indeed the method itſelf is more capable of variety; and hath ſomething more of action and reality in it. Beſides that the common way among us of meerly keeping up a diſcourſe between two blind names, is perhaps not very commendable: the perſons of the dialogue in ſuch caſes are generally like thoſe actors, who have no character in the play; and who only come in to talk upon the ſtage. They have no more diſtinction, no other marks by which you may know one from another, than the

two capital letters which uſually ſtand for them. It is much otherwiſe, and much better, among the perſons introduced by the writers in the other method: whoſe great names I uſe only to authorize this manner of dialogue, as that is all which I can pretend to imitate in them.

AN

ESSAY

ON

Mr. *Pope*'s ODYSSEY.

EVENING I.

ANTIPHAUS manag'd his affairs ſo as to get this winter ſooner than uſual to the country-ſeat of his friend Philypſus. It is there that he paſſes his time, whenever he can clear himſelf from the hurry of buſineſs, in a retirement every way agreeable; and in a full enjoyment of thoſe pleaſures, which attend on a particular friendſhip, in an open and improving converſation. The converſation there does not run in the preſent polite way of ſaying and ſaying nothing; when alone, they uſually fall into ſome points of learning; and as both of them are particularly fond of poetry, their diſputes turn more frequently on that ſubject, than any other. Indeed their differing in ſentiment can ſcarce be called diſputes; for

whenever their thoughts do not meet, each of them ſhews a diffidence in his own opinion, and a willingneſs to ſubmit to the judgment of his friend.

It is by this means that they fall into each other's ſentiments, more than cou'd well be expected from men of ſo different a turn. The inlarged genius of Philypſus always led him to dwell upon the moſt beautified parts of a poem with the greateſt pleaſure; while Antiphaus, who has a very clear head, and has given much into a ſtrict way of thinking, is taken moſt with juſt deſcriptions, and plain natural ideas: the one was ſo poſſeſs'd with the pleaſure which he felt from fine thoughts and warm expreſſions, that he did not take a full ſatisfaction in low beauty, and ſimple repreſentations of nature; the other, on the contrary, had ſuch an averſion to glitterings and elevation, that he was diſtaſted at any the leaſt appearance of either. If the latter was perhaps too much prejudiced for the ancients, from the purity and juſtneſs which we find in moſt of their works; Philypſus had his foible too, and was ſometimes caught by the flouriſh and colouring of the moderns. In a word, if Philypſus wou'd ſometimes contemn a point as low and mean, tho' in reality proper enough, and naturally expreſs'd; Antiphaus in his turn, might happen now and then to blame a paſſage which requir'd a good degree of ornament, as being too glaring and artificial.

Among ſeveral other topicks, one evening, they happen'd to fall into a diſcourſe on Mr Pope's new tranſlation of the Odyſſey. As they both found beauties in that piece agreeable

to

to their particular taſtes, they had read it over with a great deal of pleaſure: however Philypſus was the perſon who admired it the moſt. "There are ſome lines, ſays he to Antiphaus (pointing to the Odyſſey which lay before them) there are ſome favourites of mine in that poem, which you muſt not look upon with your uſual ſeverity. Indeed, Antiphaus, you ſhou'd be a little more ſenſible to the flame and ſpirit of a writer, who is evidently our preſent laureat in genius, and the moſt enliven'd tranſlator of the age."

"I will very readily allow what you ſay of that great man, returned Antiphaus; and ſhall always pay a deference to your more lively taſte of the fine and ſublime in poetry; but you muſt give me leave to diſſent from you in ſome particulars: if I do not agree with your ſentiments, in relation to ſeveral lines and paſſages of that tranſlation, 'tis perhaps becauſe I fall ſo much ſhort of you, in your inward ſenſe of the high and elevated beauties of language."

"As I cannot imagine that to be the reaſon, ſays Philypſus, I beg to hear thoſe particulars you talk of; I am perſuaded, ſeveral of the paſſages, which I have obſerv'd you to be leſs taken with in reading the tranſlation, will upon a cloſer view appear to be really beauties; to tell you the truth, I long to make a convert of you; and beg you would be full and large in communicating whatever remarks you have made on this performance. The evenings are long; we have ſufficient time upon our hands; and I know not how we can paſs it away more agreeably."

Antiphaus

Antiphaus paus'd for ſome time, and ſeem'd to be taken up in recollecting his thoughts on this point: at laſt taking a tablet out of his pocket, "Since you deſire it, (ſays he) I will "ſhew you what obſervations I made as I went "over the work; they are the thoughts which "ſtruck me at firſt ſight, and many of them "will perhaps appear little and trifling."

You will allow me, I believe, in the firſt place, that lines very good in themſelves, may be bad when conſidered as a tranſlation. The aim of a tranſlator is to give us the ſpirit of the original; and where the original is juſt, the very manner is to be obſerv'd. By the manner, I would not intend the expreſs words, or the mere turn of a period; but that the imitation ought to be eaſy, ſimple, and unadorn'd, where-ever the firſt writer uſes either of thoſe ſtiles with judgment. You are well acquainted with that plain, humble manner of Homer, which is more particularly kept up by him in the Odyſſey: and as much as I admire ſeveral parts in this tranſlation, I cannot but think there are places in it, which differ from the manner of Homer, without ſufficient reaſon for a change. The poet, in ſeveral parts of that work, ſeems to me to have let fall ſome lines that are forced; ſome of too much flouriſh, and ornament; and a few, even ſwelling, and unnatural; where the original is with good reaſon plain, and natural, and unadorn'd.

Where we admire the ſimplicity of Homer with juſtice, we cannot avoid blaming the want of it in his tranſlator. 'Tis intimated in

one

one of the *(a)* notes, that no reproach has ever fallen upon Homer, in relation to his ſinking too low, or being too familiar; that as to theſe particulars he preſerves an univerſal juſtneſs: and that there is not any one place in his poem, which can be juſtly cenſur'd upon this account. If ſo, a tranſlator of Homer has no occaſion for raiſing any thing beyond what it is in the original; if he follows his maſter, it is ſufficient: all additional flouriſh and glitterings, where we ſhall meet with the plain and familiar, are at beſt ſo many beautiful excreſcencies.

There is one caſe, which ſeems more particularly to lead this tranſlator into a glaring ſtile: 'tis almoſt ever to be found in the deſcriptions of Day, of Light, and of the Morning. 'Tis true, theſe are ſubjects which in themſelves may require ſome brightneſs in the language; but there is a great difference between giving one light, and dazling one's eyes. Beſide the conformity to the original, there is another certain and eaſy way of judging, whether the brightning in theſe or any other points be proper or not: that light, we may be ſure, falls in a wrong manner, or an undue proportion, which does not make the thing more viſible.

There are of theſe deſcriptions, Philypſus, which ſeem both to refine too much upon the original, and to err from this rule. Did you ever obſerve thoſe lines on one of the moſt agreeable images in the world, the break of

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(a) B. 14. 2.

day?

day? they are in the beginning of the third book: if you will give me leave, I will read them to you.

The *ſacred* ſun, above the waters rais'd,
Thro' heaven's *eternal brazen portals blaz'd*;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his *chearing* ray,
To Gods and Men, to *give the golden day.*

Several of theſe expreſſions ſeemed to me at firſt ſight to take from the nature and ſimplicity of the deſcription; and when I turn'd to the Greek, I found thoſe very expreſſions to have no foundation there. 'Tis the ſame caſe in the following lines.

(a) Soon as the morn, *in orient purple dreſt,*
Unbarr'd the portal of the roſeate eaſt, &c.
(b) —When the morning ſtar with early ray
Flam'd in the front of heaven, &c.

You will find theſe ſhort ſketches in Homer to be much more ſimple and natural: I leave it to your judgment, whether they appear better with theſe colourings, or not. To add one inſtance more of the ſame thing: Is it more proper for Circe to tell Ulyſſes, that he ſhould ſtay that night with her, and *ſet ſail the next morning?* or to give him leave to

(c) Spread his broad ſails, and *plough the liquid way,*
Soon as the morn *unveils her ſaffron ray?*

(a) Tranſlat. Book 4. V. 411. Orig. δ'. 306.
(b) B. 13, 112. ν'. 93.
(c) B. 12, 35. μ'. 24.--ἅμα δ' ἠῶϊ φαεσιμβρότῳ Πλεύσεαι--

I muſt

I muſt own, ſays Philypſus, this would have been more fit for the deſcription of a voyage, than for a ſpeech: in a place too, when we only find orders given for ſetting ſail at ſuch a time.

To me, proceeded Antiphaus, there ſeems to be too much of this ſpirit of beautifying in ſeveral other points, beſide thoſe topicks we have been talking of: as where he calls the nobles of Phœacia, *(d) a radiant band of noblemen*; and where he introduces Helen with *(e) a gale of rich perfume breathing before her.* If Homer mentions cups of ſolid gold; in the tranſlation,

(f) The gold gives *luſtre* to the *purple* draught;
(g) And in the *dazling* goblet *laughs* the wine.

You cannot but obſerve, by the way, that the original here is deſigned to ſignify the real intrinſic value; while only the outſide and more glittering circumſtances are what the Engliſh dwells upon entirely: but to go on. ----- The horns of a bullock are in this new language, *(h) budding honours*; and thoſe of a ram (if I am not much miſtaken) *(i) tranſlucent creſcents.* Pallas is well known to have had blue eyes given her by the ancients; now it is,

(k) Celeſtial azure brightning in her eyes.

(d) B. 6, 306. ζ'. 257.
(e) B. 4, 158. δ'. 121.
(f) B. 1, 188. α. 142.
(g) B. 3. 601. γ'. 472.
(h) B. 3, 493. γ'. 384.
(i) B. 4. 107. δ'. 85.
(k) B. 1, 408. α. 314.

This

This heightning of things, by a ſevere critick might be thought blameable; and indeed whenever it interferes, where the paſſions ought to be touch'd, it certainly is ſo in an higher degree. The reader is delighted when, after a melancholy ſcene, he ſees Penelope reviv'd by a meſſage from the gods; and ſecretly enjoying the ſatisfaction of her ſoul; but what paſſion, what idea has he, when inſtead of this he is told of her *(l) heart's dilating, and glowing with florid joy?* -------Paint to him that unhappy princeſs in her diſtreſs, retiring ſilently, and crying herſelf to ſleep; only ſhew the circumſtances, and the reader muſt be moved: does her behaviour and her ſufferings ſtrike him ſo forcibly, when he finds it embelliſh'd into

(m) —*Echoing grief*, and *ſilver-ſtreaming eyes?*

But however theſe paſſages may ſeem to be weaken'd by the finery and luxuriance of the language, this certainly is not ſo much the fault of the tranſlator, as of the age: we give much into an airy way: If a verſe runs off ſmooth, 'tis no matter for depth and clearneſs; and as the ancients valued thoughts more than ſound, we ſeem to be taken with ſounds more than thought. To ſpeak out, we are got into an idle manner of verſifying; and if Mr. Pope ſometimes fall into it, we are not ſo much to blame him for thoſe particulars, as to wonder

(l) B. 4, 1096. d. 840. (m) B. 1, 462. d. 363.

that

that he does not do it more frequently, in ſo general a debauch of taſte among us.

Hold (interrupted Philypſus) if you go on at this rate, you will ſeem only to be got into the old cant of running down our own times: I do not believe, but that I cou'd name ſome poet among us, to anſwer any of thoſe who flouriſh'd in the Auguſtan age. As to the preſent point, we rarely hear of any ſuch thing as tranſlation among them: in ſatire, we have the great names of Rocheſter, Dryden, and Oldham: (not to mention the new kind of ſatire, introduc'd among us by Butler; or that by which doctor Garth got ſo much reputation.) In critical poems, there are, you know, two or three very good, beſide that incomparable piece by Mr. Pope, all to weigh againſt Horace. As for miſcellaneous ſubjects, think of Mr. Pope again, and of Cowley, Waller and Pryor, to mention no more of them. In the epick, Milton may diſpute the laurel with either Virgil, or Homer; and in dramatick pieces of either kind, we have writers that indiſputably exceed any of the ancients.

Antiphaus was not inclin'd to enter into a diſpute of this nature. "I was only ſpeaking, ſays he, of our preſent taſte of poetry, and the prevaling manner of thoſe writers who are now upon the ſtage. As to this, Philypſus, give me leave to ſay, that the language of our writers, as well as the practice of the world, is much infected with a deſire of appearing ſmart and pretty. I think 'tis Mr. Locke obſerves, *that the humours of a people may be learnt from their uſage of words.* This ſympton of the diſeaſe is

is very ſtrong in the preſent caſe: thus to ſay that a verſe is prettily turn'd, is the higheſt commendation among the French criticks: as a fine ſcholar, polite literature, and the belles lettres are the leading expreſſions, when we would ſpeak of learning in the beſt ſenſe. And I appeal to you, who are ſo well acquainted with all our poets, whether their practice, in particular, does not fall more and more into the prettineſſes we have been complaining of. We may partly judge of this from ſome lines in the beſt of them, the writer whoſe works lie before us: I was juſt going to give you a few more inſtances of it, from the Odyſſey.

Is there any figure ſo much abus'd by the moderns, as what they call the Antitheſis? they run it into a downright playing upon words. Cowley's poetry could not live without it: Dryden uſes it frequently in his tranſlation of Virgil; and was ridicul'd, you know, on that head by the late Duke of Buckingham. I have obſerved with pleaſure, that Mr. Pope, in his tranſlation, very much avoids this little beauty, which the other affected ſo exceſſively; yet I have a place before me, where one of this kind has ſlipt from his pen: it runs thus. (He is ſpeaking of a ſtranger's arrival at the court of Penelope, diſorder'd ſo much by the riot of the ſuitors.)

—When, to taſte her hoſpital board,
Some gueſt arrives, with rumours of her lord;

(n) And

(*n*) And these *indulge their want*, and *those their woe*;
And *here the tears*, and *there the goblets flow*.

Pardon me, says Philypsus, there you do not seem to do the translator justice; the figure is countenanced by Homer himself, you see here is an Antithesis in the original. "That (answer'd Antiphaus) seems rather to be a contrast, to set the riot of the suitors in a stronger light: but call it what you please, it is only single there, whereas you see it multiplied, and worn to rags in the translation. This overdoing a point is observable in many other cases, as much as in the former; and in some, is carried on to a degree which borders upon the forc'd and unnatural.

Telemachus, bursting into tears at the name of his father, endeavours to hide his sorrow from Menelaus, who was then talking with him. Homer (*o*) says only, that Menelaus observ'd him; which words we find drawn out into this couplet:

The conscious monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,
And view'd his filial love with vast surprise.

For an humble natural description of a tripod (or caldron) set upon the fire, I wou'd recommend you to the following lines:

The flames climb round it with a *fierce embrace*;
(*p*) The fuming waters *bubble o'er the blaze*.

(*n*) B. 14, 416. ξ' 376.
(*o*) B. 4, 154. δ'. 116. ——νόησε δέ μιν Μενέλαος.
(*p*) B. 8, 474, θ'. 437. Γαστρην μὲν τρίποδος πῦρ αμφεπε θέρμετο δ' ὕδωρ.

But above all, in my opinion, are theſe on a perſon tired and quite ſpent :

—Loſt in laſſitude lay all the man,
(q) Depriv'd of voice, of motion, and of breath ;
The ſoul ſcarce waking, in the arms of death.

Or theſe :

(r) Ye Gods ! ſince this *worn frame refection knew,*
What ſcenes have I ſurvey'd of dreadful view !

Wou'd you imagine, that all which countenances the latter in the original, is a paſſage in Ulyſſes's ſpeech after his ſhipwreck, in which he intimates, *that he had not bath'd for a conſiderable time?*

I find it ſo (ſays Philypſus) and own the lines to be ſomewhat forc'd and unnatural ; indeed thoſe you have repeated ſeem generally to draw too near to that character. But I cannot conceive by what means they ſound ſo harſh to me at preſent : when I read the piece, there was ſcarce a line of them which gave me any offence.——Yes ; it muſt be by your tearing them from the body of the work, that they now ſeem not ſo agreeable. Really, Antiphaus, this is not fair uſage of an author : you rob them of their order and connection ; and 'tis thence that they perfectly loſe the beauty, which they had in the whole. Very true, reply'd

(q) B. 5, 585. ἑ. 456.
(r) B. 6. 262. ζ'. 220-----δηρὸν ἀπὸ χροὸς ἐστιν ἀλοιφή.

Anti-

Antiphaus; the warmth of reading, the thread of the ſtory, and a general tunableneſs in the verſe, will carry a man on ſtrangely; and may ſometimes cheat him into a falſe pleaſure. But then it is for this very reaſon, that I ſhou'd think, the juſteſt method of forming a judgment on particulars is, to conſider them apart. However, let us try it for once in a more entire paſſage, than any of the former. 'Tis where Minerva tells Ulyſſes that ſhe will tranſform him into the figure of an old man; that he may view the poſture of his affairs unſuſpected and unknown. The lines in Homer may be thus read into Engliſh.

Od. v'. 397, to 403.

"I will make you (ſays that goddeſs to the "hero) entirely unknown to all men; the "beauty and ſmoothneſs of your ſkin ſhall be "taken away, your limbs bent, and the hair "of your head turned grey. I will then fling "a garb over you that ſhall make you frightful "and odious to thoſe that ſee you. All that "flame and life in your eyes ſhall be loſt; I "will ſo far deform them that you ſhall look "contemptible to all the ſuitors, to your own "Penelope, and to your ſon, whom you left "yet an infant in your palace."

You know that Mr. Pope, in comparing ſome paſſages in the prophecies of Iſaiah with the famous eclogue of Virgil, turns the latter into proſe: if we follow that example in the preſent caſe, his tranſlation of theſe lines runs thus:

Od.

Od. 13. V. 453, to 464.

It fits thee at preſent to wear a dark diſguiſe, and walk ſecret, unknown to the eyes of mortals: For this my hand ſhall wither every beauty, and every elegance of form and face, ſpread a bark of wrinkles over thy ſmooth ſkin, turn the auburn honours of thy head hoar, diſfigure with coarſe attire every limb, and extinguiſh all the fire in thy eyes; add all the decays of life, and all the wants of it, eſtrange thee from thy own, thy ſon, and thy wife; every ſight ſhall turn from the loath'd object, and the blind ſuitors ſcorn their deſtruction.

Give me leave to go out of my way a little, to try the ſame experiment on a ſingle paſſage from the Iliad, which is flouriſh'd, and ſet off in an extraordinary manner. It is in the nineteenth book, where we have a poetical account of a fine breed of horſes: the original runs thus:

Ιλ. υ, 221, 225.

" Three thouſand mares graz'd theſe meads,
" with their young foals running by them;
" Boreas was enamour'd of them as they fed
" there, and turning himſelf into the ſhape of
" a fine black horſe, accompliſh'd his deſires:
" Of this breed, were twelve of the colts."

Mr. Pope's tranſlation, (only allowing equivalent expreſſions to blind the rhimes) runs thus:

Iliad,

Iliad, B. 20. v. 262, 270.

His ſpacious paſtures bred three thouſand mares, and three thouſand foals fed beſide their mothers: Boreas enamoured of the ſprightly train, conceal'd his godhead in the locks of hair that flow'd over his ſhoulders; he neigh'd to his loves with diſſembled voice, and cours'd the dapple beauties o'er the meadow: Twelve others of unrival'd ſort ſprung hence, ſwift as their mother mares and father wind.

This, if over-wrought, is the more blameable, becauſe the matter is carried very far even in the original, and ſo is the leſs capable of being ſtretch'd any farther. Mr. Pope in his note upon the place obſerves, *That Homer has the happineſs of making the leaſt circumſtance conſiderable; and that the plaineſt matter ſhines in his dreſs of poetry.* It is true, it ſhines ſufficiently in that. Some brightning is neceſſary in poetry: but an exceſs of it, Philypſus, may dazzle, or may blind our eyes; it can never aſſiſt, or delight them.

By comparing theſe paſſages, you will ſee that which I intend; the difference of manner in the ancient and modern poetry: In the latter we find expreſſions added, which ſeem to be added for beauties, and which in reality perhaps only turn the plainneſs and ſtrength of the original, into the fine and the artificial.

Upon Philypſus's acknowledging that he thought the point too much labour'd, and the tranſlation unequal; Yes, ſays Antiphaus, Mr. Pope himſelf ſeems to be ſenſible of it, in the former paſſage from the Odyſſey in particu-

lar: for ſoon after, when the ſame deſcription is repeated in the *(t)* original, he gives an entirely new turn to it in his *(u)* tranſlation: and I believe upon hearing the lines, you will be of opinion, that (excepting a word or two) it is render'd with a better grace and with more juſtice, than we find in the former.

She ſpake, then touch'd him with her powerful wand:
The ſkin ſhrunk up, and wither'd at her hand:
A ſwift old-age o'er all his members ſpread,
A ſudden froſt was ſprinkled on his head.
Nor longer in the heavy eye-ball ſhin'd
The glance divine, forth beaming from the mind;
His robe with ſpots indelible beſmear,
In rags diſhoneſt flutters with the air.

Mr. Pope without queſtion is happy in a great ſhare of judgment, as well as vivacity and ſpirit in writing: but it is next to impoſſible, in ſo long a tranſlation, eſpecially as it is in rhyme, not to give ſometimes into ſound and ornament; when, to crown all, the vogue of the world goes ſo ſtrong for both. Do not aſk, whether I ſhould deſire to ſee both of them baniſh'd out of poetry; far from it: expreſſive ſounds are of uſe in the moſt natural; and a variety in the management of them, is neceſſary to keep up attention in the reader: that, and ornament, is what ſets poetry above proſe. All I would ſay is this, that Sound is not ſufficient

(*t*) B. 13, 437.

where

where we might expect Senſe; and that in humble paſſages, in natural deſcriptions, or in moving moſt of the paſſions, additional ornaments are ſo many blemiſhes. Dreſſing up the expreſſiveneſs of Homer, in ſuch fineries, is much the ſame as if one ſhould throw a very gay modern dreſs over the Hercules Farneſe, or any of the moſt nervous ſtatues of the ancients.

But you will allow ornament, where the ſubject will bear it, and where the orignal leads the way?—In a tranſlation (anſwer'd Antiphaus) it is proper perhaps, only in the latter caſe; but allowing it in both, it ſhould not be over-wrought in either. Too much finery is always affectation: and I wiſh our writers at preſent were not ſo generally given to *elevate and ſurprize, and all that*, as Mr. Bayes calls it.

The running into this exceſs ſo much, is what has uſinew'd our poetry. 'Tis in poetry, as it is in buildings; the being vaſtly ſtudious of ornament does not only take away from the ſtrength of the work, but is a ſure token of a vitiated taſte in the deſigner.

You are always blaming the modern refinements, ſays Philypſus; but will you not allow that this taſte of the age is a ſufficient juſtification at leaſt of Mr. Pope, in thoſe caſes, where he complies with it?—We muſt write ſo as to pleaſe the world, and ſpeak ſo as to be moſt eaſily underſtood: cuſtom will often wear away the propriety of things of this nature; and as for the propriety of language, that depends upon it entirely. I allow, to uſe your own thought, that a profuſion of lace and em-

broidery wou'd be a diſguiſe upon an old hero; but they are ſo far from being improper, that they are becoming on the heroes of our age.

They may become the heroes of our age, (replied Antiphaus ſmiling) perhaps on a far different account; there is another character now wove into and blended with that of a ſoldier, to which theſe things are very agreeable: how many are there of theſe heroes, as you call them, whoſe courage reaches no farther than their ſword-knot, and whoſe conduct is taken up wholly in their dreſs? But conſider a man barely as a ſoldier, think of him in the midſt of ſome warm action, and theſe little ideas of him will diſappear: then it is that poſture, that preſſing on the foe, that graſping of his ſword, that fierceneſs in his eyes, that ſerenity and that eagerneſs on his countenance, which ſtrike us wholly, and take up all our attention. Yes, Phylipſus, if you view a real modern hero in a true light, thoſe fineries do not ſit well upon him: and I think, I never ſaw any thing more truly ridiculous, than the piece we were laughing at the other day, in your picture-gallery.——Good heaven! the duke of Marlborough in the heat of an engagement, with a full-bottom'd wig, very carefully ſpread over his ſhoulders!

But to return to the preſent taſte in poetry. ——If this corruption of the age could excuſe a writer for what he compoſes now, muſt it be carried down as far as Homer's days? muſt his heroes love and talk, and fight a-la-mode? muſt his ſtrong, ſententious lines, be ſet to the new polite

polite airs of Handel and Bononcini? Yet, were what you would alledge of any force, it would carry the matter thus far; and the whole Iliad and Odyſſey ought to be enervated down to the preſent taſte. No, whatever may be allowed to any of the proper genuine productions of this age, it ought not to make an inroad upon all others; let Homer's energy and pathos be violated as little as is poſſible: nature ought to rule in his works, and thoſe of the ancients; as ornament, and ſurprize, and elevation, have in their turn the empire of the modern world.

You ſee I begin to ſhew the old heat, that this ſubject (I think) always betrays me into. ——I beg pardon, Philypſus; and will attend more to what I am about for the future.—— I ſhould have given you ſome inſtances of this elevation from the tranſlation before us. A-propos, What a glaring deſcription of a ſword have we in the eighth Odyſſey!

——Whoſe blade of braſs *diſplays*
A *ruddy gleam*; whoſe hilt a *ſilver blaze*;
(x) Whoſe iv'ry ſheath *inwrought* with *curious pride*,
Adds *graceful terror to the wearer's ſide.*

Homer ſays, that Hermione was as beautiful as Venus; this is low and humble in compariſon of the new Hermione;

(y) On whom *a radiant pomp of graces* wait,
Reſembling Venus in *attractive ſtate.*

(x) B. 8, 437. ſ'. 403. (y) B. 4, 19. ſ'. 14.

Where a prodigy is ſent to the Ithacenſians in council, Homer ſays that *they were ſtruck at the ſight of it, and revolv'd in their minds what it might preſage to them:* this is render'd after the following manner:

(z) The wond'ring rivals gaze with cares oppreſt,
And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breaſt.

How mean is it, and how much like proſe, to tell us, that *Penelope heard the mirth of the ſuitors!* To elevate this ſufficiently, you muſt ſay,

(a) The ſhrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds,
Reflecting to the queen the ſilver ſounds.

This falſe way of animating poetry, as no doubt many will be pleaſed to call it, grows particularly prejudicial and abſurd in any caſe, where the paſſions are to be rais'd in the reader, or deſcrib'd in the perſons of the poem. Where we would move pity, in particular, nothing is (b) *more odious than a ſhew of eloquence.* Nature has provided a ſympathy in our ſouls; ſhe has put a biaſs into our temper, that inclines us forcibly to compaſſion; and we ſhould (c) leave her to her own work in ſuch points, without any of the impertinent aſſiſtances of art.

(z) B. 2. 183, &c. 156. (a) B. 1, 425. &c. 328.
(b) Odi reum cui eſſe diſerto vacet. *Quintil.* Lib. 11. c. 1.
(c) Quicquid meris adjicietur affectibus, omnes eorum diluet vires, & miſerationem ſecuritate laxabit. *Quintil.* Inſtit. Lib. 11, c. 1.

The

The lines you have juſt repeated, interrupted Philypſus, are ſuch as I cannot admire: but I think you carry the point too far againſt art in general. Is there not the greateſt art required in moving the paſſions? Why then have Cicero, and all the criticks of old, given us ſo numerous rules in this caſe? Yes, reply'd Antiphaus, great art, or rather a great genius, is very neceſſary toward any excellence this way. But what I have ſaid was intended not ſo much againſt the uſe of art, as the appearances of it. 'Tis the greateſt of arts, to conceal the art you uſe; and to have it very evident, is the greateſt of blemiſhes. The criticks, and Cicero in particular, ſpeak with the utmoſt plainneſs againſt any thing of that kind. Where the paſſions are to be touch'd, apparent art is apparent fraud; ſo that here particular care ſhould be taken, that nothing ſhould be over-wrought.

'Tis on this account, that when you compare the following lines with the original, you will not, I dare ſay, be over-fond of them.

The *ſoul of friendſhip* to my hope is loſt,
(d) Fated to wander from his natal coaſt.

He ſaid: *chill horrors* ſhook my *ſhiv'ring ſoul*,
(e) *Rack'd with convulſive pangs* in duſt I roll.

And that entire paſſage of Penelope,

Rolling convulſive on the floor, is ſeen
The piteous object of a proſtrate queen.

(d) B. 4, 248. d°. 182. (e) B. 4, 726. d°. 539.

Words to her dumb complaint a pauſe ſupplies,
And breath, to waſte in unavailing cries:
Around their ſov'reign wept the *menial fair,*
(*f*) To whom ſhe thus *addreſs'd her deep deſpair,* &c.

I wiſh this falſe elevation and profuſion of ornament does not carry the tranſlator, in ſome few caſes, into downright fuſtian. (*g*) *A man's being loſt in laſſitude*, and *a ſoul ſcarce waking in the arms of death*, look'd very much that way. Do you remember where he talks of (*h*) *princes on princes roll'd*, and (*i*) *gods being heap'd on gods?* Or how in another place we are told, that

(*k*)————*The* Pharian *iſle*
Fronts the deep roar of diſemboguing Nile?

You know the character of ſome of Sir John Falſtaff's attendants, in the *Merry Wives of Windſor*; a ſort of men, who are induſtrious in talking hard words; and whoſe humour is to be unintelligible. One would almoſt imagine the humble account of ſhutting a door, in the end of the firſt Odyſſey, to be copied from thoſe illuſtrious originals.

———— The door *reclos'd*;
The bolt, *obedient* to the ſilken cord,

(*f*) B. 4, 957. *d'*. 721. (*g*) See p. 14. (*h*) B. 11, 151. (*i*) Obſ. 27. on B. 11. ver. 383. (*k*) B. 4, 480.

(*i*) *To*

(l) To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,
Secur'd the valves.——

I own (says Philypsus) I cannot but give up those lines to you, and several of the other you mention'd before. The first lines, when you repeated them, I took to be the very worst you could pick out of the Odyssey: but I know not how it comes about, you rise gradually in your demands upon me; and are got insensibly from lines in that piece, which were forced and too much beautified, to things unnatural and shocking. When I thought of making a convert of you to an entire admiration of this translation, I fancy, I was much mistaken; at this rate, you will turn the tables upon me: and to tell you the truth, I cannot but confess, that the poet has, in some cases, fallen into each of the faults you mention.

In some cases doubtless (reply'd Antiphaus) this translation is not to be commended: I take it to be as good, as any translation of Homer into English, and in rhyme, could be expected to be: in all probability, we might safely add, that no other writers of the age could, in the whole, have perform'd such a task so well. But a perfect piece of this kind cannot be expected: if Homer himself is allowed to sleep a little, his translator certainly may nod sometimes.——

One thing I observed (interrupted Philypsus) in the lines you have repeated; that the faul-

(l) B. 1, 555, ά. 441, —— Θύρην ἐπέρυσε κοράνῃ Ἀργυρέῃ.---

tineſs of ſeveral of them was owing to an exceſs in one of the greateſt beauties of poetry, I mean, the metaphors too frequent in them. I obſerved the ſame (ſays Antiphaus) as I was collecting theſe little remarks: it occaſioned my uſing a particular paper for that ſingle point; if it did not grow ſo late, I would ſhew it to you; but——No, let us have it now, cry'd Philypſus: I never knew any thing of yours too long, and if it be that paper in your hand, I ſhould think it much too ſhort; were it not for my concern for the poet, and the deſire I have of finding as few faults in his writings as poſſible.

Methaphor, ſays Antiphaus, is certainly the moſt univerſal enlivener of poetry. At the ſame time that it adds to the dignity of verſe, it gives it an agreeable variety; together with a power of painting out all its images, in the boldeſt and ſtrongeſt manner in the world. 'Tis this which animates thoſe objects, which muſt otherwiſe be ſtill and unaffecting: it flings every thing into motion, life, and action: by this the arrow is eager and on the wing; by this the ſword thirſts for blood, and the ſpear rages in the hands of the warrior. Metaphor raiſes each ſubject out of the heavy narrative way: it creates new beings; it repreſents the paſſions of men, and even mere names, as animated and embodied; and ſhews them in the poſture and attitudes of agents. Thus when the battles are going to join, you ſee rage ſtalk amidſt the combatants; pointing with one hand to the enemy, and in the other, ſhaking the torch of war. By this, the valleys and mountains rejoice,

rejoice, when peace once more ſpreads her downy wings, and plenty deſcends from heaven upon the happy climate. 'Tis metaphor which makes the Nile know Cæſar; and the ſea its preſent monarch.

If Mr. Pope manages this powerful figure frequently to the beſt advantage, ſometimes he happens not to be ſo happy in the uſe of it. The force of metaphor is to make things ſtrong, clear and ſenſible: any confuſion deſtroys the very end of it; and yet a little inaccuracy may occaſion groſs errors this way. Sometimes what is juſt with the figurative, may diſagree with the proper: ſometimes again, an idea which might ſtand with the proper expreſſion, will be inconſiſtent with the figurative. A miſapplication either way is very obvious, and yet it gives a jar to the ideas, and makes the ſenſe of a line to be perplexed and in confuſion.

It ſounds but oddly to talk of a perſon, and of his picture, without any manner of diſtinction: to ſay, that *the piece, drawn by ſir Godfrey Kneller for Mr. Pope, is an excellent poet, and writes with the greateſt command imaginable*; or, that *Mr. Pope is a very good piece, and his face very well coloured, though he is but juſt recovered from a fit of ſickneſs*; either of them would carry a mixt incoherent ſenſe with them: this I take to be partly the caſe in the following lines:

(*m*) Now from my *fond embrace* by tempeſts torn,
Our other *column of the ſtate* is born;
Nor took a *kind adieu.*——
(*n*) They *ſweep* Neptune's ſmooth *face.*
(*o*) Declining, with his *ſloping wheels*
Down *ſunk* the *ſun.*——

To ſay, *the god of light was driving his car down the ſteep of heaven* (as Mr. Pope ſomewhere expreſſes it) is metaphorical; to ſay *the ſun is ſetting*, is proper: but ſhould one ſay, *the ſun is ſetting with ſloping wheels*, this would be neither metaphorical, nor proper; nor could it raiſe any thing in the mind, but a confuſion of ideas.

Thus:

(*p*) Hear me, oh *Neptune!* thou whoſe *arms are hurl'd*
From *ſhore to ſhore*, and *gird* the ſolid world.

I think Neptune has the luck of it; for 'tis the ſame deity, that in another place makes juſt ſuch a figure, as I have ſeen him in ſome Mortlack-hangings.

(*q*) The raging monarch ſhook his *azure head*,
And thus in ſecret to his ſoul he ſaid, *&c.*
(*r*) This ſaid, his *ſea-green ſteeds* divide the foam.

(*m*) B. 4, 962. δ'. 727. Παῖδ' ἐγαπητὸν——
(*n*) B. 9, 210. ἰ. 180. Πολλὴν ἅλα τύπτ' ἐν ἐρετμοῖς.
(*o*) B. 2, 477. β. 388. Δυσέτη Ἡέλιος.
(*p*) B. 9, 618. ἰ. 528. Κλῦθι, Ποσειδάων γαιήοχε——
(*q*) B. 5, 365. ἑ. 285 (*r*) B. 5, 480. ἑ. 380.

Such

Such confuſions of the metaphor and the proper have a great reſemblance to that abſurdity of mixing fable and reality together, which appears ſo groſly in Mr. Dryden's *Hind and Panther*; and which was the very thing, that provoked Lord Halifax and Mr Pryor to ridicule that piece with ſo much humour and good ſenſe. What thoſe authors have ſaid on that ſubject, may give a ſide-light to what I mean in the preſent caſe. I think the book is behind you. If you will be ſo good as to reach it down, I'll juſt read that paſſage in their Preface to you, where they are ſpeaking of this odd mixture.—O, here it is. It begins with mentioning the antient fabuliſts. "They "wrote (ſay they) in ſigns, and ſpoke in para- "bles: all their fables carry a double meaning: "the ſtory is one and entire; the characters "the ſame throughout; not broken or chang- "ed, and always conformable to the nature of "the creatures they introduce. They never "tell you that the dog, which ſnapt at a "ſhadow, loſt his troop of horſe; that wou'd "be unintelligible.—This is his (Dryden's) "new way of telling a ſtory, and confounding "the moral and the fable together." After inſtancing from the *Hind and Panther*, he goes on thus: "What relation has the Hind to "our Saviour? or what notion have we of a "Panther's bible? if you ſay, he means the "church, how does the church feed on lawns, "or range in the foreſt? Let it be always a "church, or always the cloven-footed beaſt, "for we cannot bear his ſhifting the ſcene "every line.

I had

I had almoſt forgot to tell you, that upon conſulting the original, there was no metaphor at all to be found, for either of the lines I laſt repeated from the Odyſſey. We have now metaphors perpetually; the tranſlator is vaſtly fond of them. I need not ſay, that an exceſs this way is very blameable; you know the criticks ſpeak againſt it in a high ſtrain, and one of them goes ſo far as to ſay, that this (s) *figure, when frequent, obſcures the piece, and fatigues the reader; when continual, 'tis no longer a poem, 'tis all allegory and enigma.*

As a falſe mixture of the proper and the figurative confuſes the ſenſe, the joining metaphors together which do not agree, makes it ſtill more dark and perplexed. Theſe are like (what they call) medley-pieces; a huddled kind of pictures, which ſhew a variety of objects, flung together without any order or deſign: As that in the beginning of Horace's *Art of Poetry*, they join the limbs of one creature to the body of another; and confuſe all the properties and circumſtances of an action.

If the poet be not very careful, he may by theſe means tye not only things improper, but even contrarieties, together. Do not the following lines border on this? To me the metaphors in them ſeem to be improperly united.

From Elateus' ſtrong arm the *Diſcus* flies,
And *ſings with unmatch'd force* along the ſkies:

(s) Frequens (*Metapheræ uſus*) & obſcurat, & tædio complet: continuus vero in allegoriam & ænigma exit. *Quintilian.* Inſtit. L. 8. c. 6.

And

And Laodame *whirls high*, with dreadful ſway,
(t) *The gloves of death.*—

At the ſame time, nothing can be more proper and narrative than the original in that place. Again:

(u) From his eyes *pour'd down the tender dew.*
(x) But Anticlus, unable to controul,
Spoke *loud* the *languiſh* of his yearning ſoul.

In theſe the action is deſcribed in words, that import a violence; while the act to be expreſs'd, is plainly ſomething ſtill and gentle.

Nothing is more known in relation to the metaphor, than that rule of Cicero's; (y) *that it ſhould be ſo modeſt, as to ſeem to have been handed into the place of the proper word, not to have forc'd it's way thither: it ſhould fall into it in a free, voluntary manner.* Otherwiſe it will make the ſenſe dark and intricate; and that abſolutely deſtroys all the uſe of it; for as metaphor ſhould be the *greateſt light and ornament of language, obſcurity is the moſt abſurd thing, and the moſt to be avoided in metaphor.*

(t) B. 8, 140. θ'. 130. Δίσκῳ δ' αὖ πάντων προφερέστατος ἦεν Ελατρεὺς, Πὺξ δ' αὖ Δαοδάμας ———
(u) B. 11, 486. λ'. 390. ——— Θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβων.
(x) B. 4, 388. δ'. 286.
(y) Verecunda debet eſſe Tranſlatio, ut deducta eſſe in alienum locum, non irruiſſe; atque ut precario, non vi veniſſe videatur. ——— Eſt hoc magnum ornamentum orationis, in quo obſcuritas fugienda eſt. *Cicero* de Oratore, Lib. 3.

I de-

I deſire you would give me your ſentiments on a certain paſſage, in this view. What do you think of the images in the following line?

They cuff, they tear, their cheeks and nec[illegible] they rend.

Do you remember whom 'tis ſpoken of? Really, ſays Philypſus, I cannot well determine whether it is ſpoken of men, or of a couple of beaſts fighting.—Of neither, anſwered Antiphaus: 'tis uſed of eagles in the *(a)* Odyſſey; and in the *(b)* Iliad of a couple of vulturs.

There is an obſervation ariſing from this, which ought to be conſidered, in transferring metaphors; it may be ſaid, that the word *Cheeks* in this verſe, is juſtified by the original. Cuſtom, Philypſus, is the great rule of words: and what is eaſy in one language, will not bear in another; becauſe uſage may have ſoften'd in one, what in the other is yet harſh and unwarrantable. This is evident from the very word in debate. Thus we uſe *Cheeks* in Engliſh of ſome creatures beſide men; the term is ſo far familiariz'd, and ſounds very well: Yet to talk of the cheeks of a pheaſant, or the cheeks of a vultur, will by no means ſound the ſofter for its prevailing in thoſe other particulars.

However, this is agreed on all hands; that a metaphor is not to be uſed, unleſs it gives a greater light, and makes the thing more ſenſible to us. Are the borrow'd terms, in this caſe, more expreſſive than the native? Nay, do

(*a*) B. 2, 73. (*b*) Iliad 16, 524.

they

they give you as clear ideas, as the native would? Do they give you as clear, where the poet talks of (c) aſſwaging thirſt with a generous vintage, or of Polypheme's doing the ſame thing with a (d) milky deluge? What do you think of an (e) ozier-fringed bank, of a voice (juſt heard) (f) wounding the ear, or of the ſea's being called the (g) howling deſart of the main? In the notes to the Odyſſey, 'tis (h) queſtion'd whether the nodding of a mountain be a natural image; ſhould not you be apt to think too, that a mountain (i) ſhaking the foreſts on his ſides, is fitter for an earthquake, than a metaphor? What ſort of an idea have you of a (k) well-fought wall, or a (l) thrice-ear'd field? In a word, have you any idea at all, of Jove's (m) rearing a tempeſt, or of (n) the whiſtling winds waking the ſky?

Philypſus conſulted his own mind all along as theſe points were offer'd; and endeavour'd very fairly to diſcover, whether the images were as clear and evident, as they ought to be: He knew that the great uſe and (o) beauty of metaphor, was to give light and perſpicuity to a deſcription; to cloath words (as he us'd to ſay) with ſubſtance; and to make language viſible: But as, upon this view, he cou'd not anſwer fully what had been produc'd, he was

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(c) B. 6, 298. (d) B. 9, 353. (e) B. 14, 533.
(f) B. 5, 515. (g) B. 4, 748. (h) B. 14, 510.
(i) B. 13, 400. (k) B. 5, 395. (l) B. 5, 159.
(m) B. 5, 391. (n) B. 3. 213.
(o) Modus nullus eſt florentior; nec qui plus luminis afferat Orationi. *Cicero* de Oratore, L. 3.

willing

willing to evade it as much as he cou'd. These inſtances, ſays he (turning to Antiphaus) tho' few for ſo large a piece, when laid together, are apt to incline one's judgment to the prejudice of the tranſlator: it will not be fair to look only on the worſt ſide of him; we owe it to juſtice, and to the excellencies of that great man, to give one evening to his beauties as well as this to his defects.—Be ſo good then (interrupted Antiphaus) as to undertake that part for the next: You know me ſo well, I need not aſſure you, that I ſhall be as much pleas'd with hearing the beauties, as I am uneaſy in repeating the faults of this writer.

After ſome other diſcourſe, Antiphaus going for his own apartment, and reflecting upon what had paſs'd between him and his friend, took occaſion to obſerve; "how impoſſible "almoſt it is for the greateſt Genius not to "fail ſometimes in an undertaking of this na-"ture: and how unavoidable it will be for "the Reader, (in a poem generally well wrote) "not to be led away from obſerving thoſe "faults, by the vaſt power of ornament, the "eaſy fluency of the verſe, and his engagement "to the beauties of a favourite piece." *The beſt qualified* (added he) *will thus err, when they write for fame; and the moſt judicious will be thus deceived, when they read for pleaſure.*

AN

AN

ESSAY

ON

Mr. *Pope*'s ODYSSEY.

EVENING II.

BETWEEN company and buſineſs, it was ſome time before Philypſus and Antiphaus cou'd get an evening to themſelves; the latter had waited for it with ſome impatience; and did not fail, pretty early in it, to remind Philypſus of his promiſe. I long, ſays he, to ſee your remarks; ſuch a method of viewing a poem, is ſomething like the way of our favourite Vertot in writing hiſtory: we have the material parts of it, without paſſing thro' the dead lines, which go toward the narrative; or the leſs ſignificant paſſages, which are to fill up the chain of events. You muſt not expect any great matters, anſwer'd Philypſus: Though I have had longer time than we talk'd of at firſt, it has been ſufficient only for collect-

collecting ſome of the ſcatter'd beauties of this excellent tranſlation.

Some of the lines which you repeated the former evening, ſhew'd that the greatneſs of his genius had led Mr. Pope ſometimes into an exceſs; if things can be too much beautified, that fault does certainly belong to him. In a few lines, I confeſs, he diſovers a greater love of ornament, than is becoming. This is the fountain of all the ſeveral peccadillo's which you obſerv'd from his writings; whatever there is to be found in them, either too glaring, or forc'd, or figurative, or too much elevated, may fairly be accounted for this way. You, ſir, produc'd ſome paſſages, as I remember, under each of theſe characters: But how pardonable is it, for ſo exalted a genius, to run ſometimes into an exceſs of ornament! And how admirable for ſuch, to excel often in the juſt, handſome, natural manner!

Is not almoſt the entire *(a)* epiſode of Menelaus and Proteus particularly juſt, and beautiful? What can have a greater ſhare of nature, without any exceſſes, than the adventure with *(b)* Nauſicaa? How juſtly are the paſſions preſerv'd in *(c)* the deſcent into hell; and before, in all the ſpeeches *(d)* of Circe and Calypſo?

Tho' theſe paſſages are generally of too great a length to bear repeating in a ſingle evening, you will indulge me with the reading ſome of the moſt finiſh'd parts of them.

(a) B. 4, 493. to Verſe 776. *(b)* B. 6. *(c)* B. 11. *(d)* B. 5, and 10.

The

The whole epiſode of Menelaus and Proteus is particularly well wrote; but the things chiefly to be admir'd in it are the metamorphoſis of Proteus;—his ſpeech on the unhappy curioſity of men;—the account immediately after, of the deaths of *Ajax* and *Agamemnon*; and above all, that enliven'd concluſion, in relation to Elyſium, and the future happineſs of Menelaus. You remember the various transformations of Proteus; and I believe, will allow them to be exceedingly well expreſs'd:

A lion now, he curls a ſurgy mane;
Sudden our bands a ſpotted pard reſtrain;
Then arm'd with tuſks, and lightning in his eyes,
A boar's obſcener ſhape the god belies:
On ſpiry volumes there a dragon rides;
Here, from our ſtrict embrace a ſtream he glides:
And laſt, ſublime his ſtately growth he rears
(e) A tree, and well-diſſembled foliage wears.

The lines are extremely good, ſays Antiphaus; but I had a thought came into my head, that poſſeſs'd me, all the time you were reading them: I could not forbear thinking, what an happy contrivance it would be in the managers of the Old Houſe, to bring this deity upon the ſtage in the ſame manner, that he appears in theſe verſes. Such a performance wou'd ſet their character in the moſt eminent light: they wou'd infallibly get the ſtart of

(e) B. 4, 615, to 622.

their

their ingenious rivals; and poor doctor Fauſtus and his dragon, would no longer be the higheſt entertainment of the Beaux Eſprits of this age.

I am got into another part of the poem, (ſays Philypſus) which might ſerve in ſome meaſure, to arm their rivals of Lincolns-Inn-Fields, againſt ſo formidable an undertaking. There are paſſages in the *Deſcent into Hell*, capable of furniſhing out a great deal of the wonderful and ſurprizing, in this way. But to return: can any thing be more pathetick, than this whole book? eſpecially, the latter part, when the heroes come to make their appearance. Though I am always loſt in the variety of beauties, which we find in it; I muſt ſingle out the ſpeech of Agamemnon; and read (at leaſt) the concluſion of it to you:

When war has thunder'd with its loudeſt ſtorms,
Death thou haſt ſeen in all her ghaſtly forms;
In duel met her, on the liſted ground,
When hand to hand they wound return for wound:
But never have thy eyes aſtoniſh'd view'd
So vile a deed, ſo dire a ſcene of blood.
Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl
Glows in our veins, and opens ev'ry ſoul,
We groan, we faint; with blood the dome is dy'd,
And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tyde—
Her breaſt all gore, with lamentable cries,
The bleeding innocent Caſſandra dies!
Then, tho' pale death froze cold in ev'ry vein,
(f) My ſword I ſtrive to wield,—but ſtrive in vain.

(*f*) B. 11, 528. λ'. 423.

Surely

Surely nothing in nature can be conceived of greater ſtrength and emotion, than this circumſtance. We ſee the hero weltring on the floor, all covered with blood, and in the laſt agonies of death. It was then, that he heard the cries and ſhrieks of the daughter of Priam, purſued by the traitors, and ſtabb'd to the heart by the barbarous Clytemneſtra: expiring as he was, he endeavours to raiſe up his arm, and at laſt gets his hand upon the hilt of his ſword; which he had ſtrength only to graſp, with a look full of rage, compaſſion, and revenge. Methinks, Antiphaus, I ſee him now expired, and dropt upon the floor; but though expired, there is ſtill that rage and paſſion in his countenance; he ſtill graſps his ſword, and ſeems to threaten the traitors and the adultreſs with his looks.

I know nothing finer (ſays Antiphaus) than theſe laſt efforts of dying heroes. They affect the ſoul wonderfully: and the weakneſs of their body, which will not permit their acting at ſuch times, in my opinion ſets off their courage, and their deſire of action, in the ſtrongeſt light imaginable. There is nothing unnatural in this; though indeed it follows nature to its laſt pitch: the beſt hiſtorians, as well as the firſt poets, make uſe of ſuch circumſtances very finely; and I remember inſtances of it in (*g*) Livy and (*h*) Salluſt, that carry

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(*g*) Etiam quos vires ſanguiſque deſereret, ut intra vallum hoſtium *caderent*, nitebantur. *Liv.* vol. 3. p. 145. per *Hearne*.

(*h*) Catilina vero longe a ſuis inter hoſtium cadavera repertus eſt, paululum etiam ſpirans, ferociamque animi, quam habuerat vivus, in vultu retinens. *Sall. Bell. Cat.* juxta finem.

this

this matter as far as *(i)* Virgil or Homer. But ſome moderns, as uſual, ſtretch it ſo immoderately, that they go beyond nature: and the moment it is ſo, it muſt be ridiculous. Some ſerious writers (as well as ſome humorous ones) have carried this to the laſt exceſs. It would be very well if their heroes only threaten'd in death, but they muſt die *(k)* away, without being at all the weaker: others (in the heat of battle, you may be ſure) forget that they are *(l)* killed, and ſo keep on fighting: like Strada's ſoldiers, who after they are cut in two, *(m)* ſurvive themſelves; and fight on with that half of their bodies, that is left them; to revenge the other, which was knocked on the head an hour or two before.

Such things as thoſe, when offered ſeriouſly (anſwered Philypſus) are not blemiſhes in a piece; they are downright falſities; mere outrages againſt truth, as well as common ſenſe. Nothing can be invented more ridiculous. They are like the incomprehenſible lyes of Sir John Falſtaff; and put one in mind of his *fighting with Percy an hour by Shrewſbury clock*, after that gentleman had been killed before very heartily by Prince Henry.

On the contrary, Homer is as great a friend to truth and nature, as he is to poetry: he

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(i) G. 4, 526 Æn. 9, 444.

(k) Minacciava morendo, e non langu'a. *Taſſo Cant.* 19. *St.* 26.

(l) Il pover' huomo, che non ſen' era accorto,
Andava combattendo, ed era morto. *Berni.*

(m) Dimidio corpore pugnabant ſibi *ſuperſtites*, ac *peremptæ* partis ultores. *Strad.* Dec. 2. Lib. 2.

knows

knows how to raiſe every thing, as far as it will bear; he has always a command of whatever is proper to be ſaid; and, which is yet greater, always underſtands when he has ſaid enough.

But we forget ourſelves, Antiphaus: this digreſſion has carried us ſo far, that if we do not ſoon go on with this ſpeech of Agamemnon's which occaſioned it, we ſhall not know where it left off. After that pathetick account of his Death, and the barbarity of his queen, he proceeds:

Nor did my traitreſs wife theſe eye-lids cloſe,
Or decently in death my limbs compoſe.
O woman, woman! when to ill thy mind
Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend.
And ſuch was mine! who baſely plung'd her ſword
Thro' the fond boſom, where ſhe reign'd ador'd!
Alas! I hop'd, the toils of war o'ercome,
To meet ſoft quiet and repoſe at home;
Deluſive hope!——O Wife, thy deeds diſgrace
The perjur'd ſex, and blacken all the race;
And ſhou'd poſterity one virtuous find,
(n) Name Clytemneſtra, they will curſe the kind.

The turn of expreſſion in this, is much more lively and paſſionate, than the language of Homer himſelf. As you cannot value any delays, where we meet with ſuch improvements; I am ſure you will give me leave to read the

(n) B. 11, 540. λ. 433.

ſpeech of Ulyſſes juſt after. That I mean, in which he gives Achilles an account of his ſon Pyrrhus's behaviour in the war.

—Hear with pleas'd attention the renown,
The wars and wiſdom of thy gallant ſon:
With me from Scyros to the field of fame,
Radiant in arms the blooming hero came.
When Greece aſſembled all her hundred ſtates,
To ripen counſels, and decide debates,
Heav'ns! how he charm'd us with a flow of ſenſe,
And won the heart with manly eloquence!
He firſt was ſeen of all the peers to riſe,
(o) The third in wiſdom, where they all were wiſe.—

Give me leave (ſays Antiphaus, interrupting him)——that very verſe I have formerly taken notice of; the tranſlator ſeems to me to have uſed an unneceſſary caution in it: he is tender of making Ulyſſes commend himſelf by name, where Homer does it with the greateſt bluntneſs.—

I know it, ſays Philypſus; but that I ſhould have put to the account of his improvement on this ſpeech. Cou'd any thing have been more groſs, than to have imitated that line in its own coarſe, ruſtick dialect? Is it not better on all hands for ſuch a ſentiment to be imply'd, than to be expreſs'd?

Cuſtom and prejudice (anſwered Antiphaus) have now render'd it unpolite, and even ſhock-

(o) B. 11, 626. λ'. 511.

ing,

ing, for a man almoſt in any caſe to commend himſelf: but it was not thus anciently. It is certain, that it was not thus in the times of thoſe heroes, whom Homer deſcribes; and Homer therefore acts with propriety, in making Ulyſſes ſay, that *Neſtor and himſelf were the wiſeſt of all the Grecians.* Now, is the tranſlator in this caſe to follow his author, or not? Is he to preſerve the manners of the ancients in the characters of his heroes? or is he to modernize them, and to make Ulyſſes and Achilles appear the moſt accompliſh'd, fineſt gentlemen in the world?

That will be carrying the matter too far, replied Philypſus; I ſpeak it only as to this particular; and I own I am yet to be convinced, that this humor of commending themſelves, was really ſo prevalent among the ancients. Perhaps this is one of the places where Homer nods: it might be a ſlip of haſte or inattention.—

No, interrupted Antiphaus, nothing can be more certain, than the freedom and honeſty of ſpeech uſed among the ancients in this particular; not only before Homer, but very long after his time. —— If Homer's Ulyſſes here calls himſelf the wiſeſt of Grecians, his Achilles does not ſtick at calling himſelf *the beſt and moſt valiant of them*; and that too, in a council of all the princes. Virgil has given us his approbation of both the one and the other, in making Æneas talk frequently of his own piety and valour. I cou'd tire you with quotations of this kind: Socrates, in Plato, is always brought in to his advantage; and yet

there he does juſt the ſame thing with Ulyſſe in the preſent caſe: he himſelf quotes the Ora-cle, which pronounced him to be *the wiſeſt* [illegible] *men.* Xenophon repreſents Cyrus, upon hi death-bed, as taking notice of the greateſt beau-ty of his own character, his humanity; in a piece, which every one knows, was deſigne for the character of a perfect Prince. In a word whole treatiſes have been wrote of this ver thing, and in this very ſtrain. Cæſar, and th great Jewiſh writer of his own life, frequentl commend themſelves: the greateſt critick, a well as the greateſt orator, among the Roman who ſo oftens reckons modeſty among th things which are moſt neceſſary towards ren-dering a man great in his profeſſion; how ope and frequent is he in praiſing himſelf, and i ſetting his own merit in a true light? But wha puts this beyond diſpute, (and ſhews at th ſame time, that a juſt commendation of one' ſelf, may be very conſiſtent with the greate modeſty) is to be found in the ſacred writing in which Moſes ſays of himſelf, *that he wa the meekeſt man upon earth.*

Thus free were the ancients in commendin themſelves; and not to conſider here, whethe we, or they were in the right; (whether the behaviour may not be thought to have ha more of veracity in it; and our method t have been grounded, in a great degree, on falſe eſtimate of things: however that be) think enough has been ſaid, to ſhew that Hom was not drowſy, when he wrote this line; an that Ulyſſes might uſe it, without any thin of a vitious arrogance.

T

To confeſs the truth (ſays Philypſus) I was really ignorant in this point of the uſage of the ancients, and had modelled their manners too much by our own. I now ſee my error, and think the tranſlator might have ſpared the excuſe which he (o) makes for his indecency in Ulyſſes's behaviour; 'tis plain, it would not have been ſo improper, before a people, leſs noted for vain-glory, than the Phæacians. I thank you, Antiphaus, for this new light; and ſhall go on with the hero's character of Pyrrhus, without thinking him ſo aſſuming, as he formerly appeared to me to have been. After placing the ſon of Achilles next to Neſtor and himſelf in wiſdom, he proceeds to give an account of his courage; and in that, he ſets him above all the Grecians, without exception.

But when, to try the fortune of the day,
Hoſt mov'd tow'rd hoſt in terrible array,
Before the van, impatient for the fight,
With martial port he ſtrode, and ſtern delight.—
When Ilion in the horſe receiv'd her doom,
And unſeen armies ambuſh'd in its womb;
Greece gave her latent warriors to my care,
'Twas mine on Troy to pour th' impriſon'd war.
Then, when the boldeſt boſom beat with fear,
When the ſtern eyes of heroes drop'd a tear;
Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd,
Fluſh'd in his cheek, or ſally'd in his blood;

(o) Note on ver. 626. B. 11.

Indignant in the dark receſs he ſtands,
Pants for the battle, and the war demands;
His voice breath'd death; and with a martial air
(p) He graſp'd his ſword, and ſhook his glitt'ring ſpear.

How well is the earneſt ſpirit of a young hero kept up throughout this whole paſſage? how does the impetuouſneſs of his ſoul appear, in theſe previous actions of the warrior? Had one the poetical liberty of making compariſons, I ſhould not ſtick at ſaying, that this has a great reſemblance to that admirable deſcription of a war-horſe, in the moſt finiſh'd poem in the world.

—(q) *Tum, ſiqua ſonum procul arma dedere*;
Stare loco neſcit, *micat auribus, & tremit artus:*
Collectumque premens volvit ſub naribus ignem.

'Tis poſſible that Mr. Pope had this behaviour of Pyrrhus in his eye, when he gave thoſe lively ſtrokes in the entrance of his *Ode for Muſick*. We ſee the heroes there in the ſame poſtures, when animated by the martial ſtrains of Orpheus.

(r) Each chief his ſev'nfold ſhield diſplay'd,
And half unſheath'd the ſhining blade;
And ſeas, and rocks, and ſkies reſound
To arms, to arms, to arms!

(p) B. 11. 650. λ'. 531.
(q) *Virgil's* Georgicks, 3, 83.
(r) Stanza 3.

By

By the ſudden flow of their ſpirits, and the rapidity of their imagination, they prevent the war: they ſhew a noble forgetfulneſs of the place and circumſtances of things about them, and think themſelves already engaging with the abſent enemy.

There is one ſpeech more of thoſe I mentioned at firſt, which I cannot forbear repeating to you; though I am ſenſible that I have been too long upon this head already. It is that of Circe to Ulyſſes, in the tenth Odyſſey.

Then wav'd the wand, and then the word was giv'n.
Hence to thy fellows! (dreadful ſhe began)
Go, be a beaſt!— I heard, and yet was man.
Then ſudden whirling like a waving flame
My beamy faulchion, I aſſault the dame:
Struck with unuſual fear, ſhe trembling cries,
She faints, ſhe falls, ſhe lifts her weeping eyes.
[you came?
What art thou? ſay, from whence, from whom
O more than human! tell thy race, thy name.
Amazing ſtrength theſe poiſons to ſuſtain!
Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain.
Or art thou he? the man to come (foretold
By Hermes pow'rful with the wand of gold)
The man from Troy, who wander'd Ocean round,
The man, for Wiſdom's various arts renown'd:
(1) Ulyſſes?—Oh! thy threat'ning fury ceaſe.—

(1) B. 10, 395. x'. 330.

What ſtarts? what terror, and amazement? What paſſionate breaks are there in theſe lines? How ſolemn is the beginning? how emphatical the account of the action? and how lively the ſurpriſe and confuſion of the inchantreſs, upon finding the inefficacy of her charms? Nature here appears in every word that ſhe ſays; if the diſappointment is great and ſhocking, the lines too are all impetuous and abrupt: if the paſſions ſtrong and various, the expreſſions in the tranſlation are inſtant and preſſing, and the ſtyle often chang'd: How great and ſwift is the alteration, from an imperious cruel tyrant, to a poor weak helpleſs woman? And how is it equall'd by that judicious ſhifting of the ſcene in this piece? There the change is as ſudden and immediate; and nothing can be greater than the fall from the haughtineſs of

Go, be a beaſt!——

to the meanneſs of the line juſt after,

She faints, ſhe falls, ſhe lifts her weeping eyes.

You cannot but obſerve farther, my Antiphaus, that Mr. Pope has improv'd this deſcription with all thoſe figures, which the ancient Criticks have always look'd upon as the moſt proper to expreſs an hurry of paſſion. The tranſpoſition, the omiſſion of words, the preſſing uſe of exclaiming and interrogation, and the general inconnection which runs through it, are all apply'd in the moſt natural and poetical manner. There is a note on a paſſage not long

long before this, which gives us in one view several excellent obſervations of this kind, and which probably he had in his eye here; for the rules of it are exactly follow'd in the preſent caſe. This Poet is the beſt commentator on himſelf; give me leave therefore juſt to look back for the *(t)* note on the ſpeech of Eurylochus; that you may ſee how exactly thoſe obſervations tally with his performance here, in every particular article.

"We have here (ſays he) a very lively "picture of a perſon in a great fright:— the "very manner of ſpeaking repreſents the diſor- "der of the ſpeaker; he is in too great an "emotion to introduce his ſpeech by any pre- "face, he breaks at once into it without pre- "paration, as if he could not ſoon enough "deliver his thoughts."——Again:

"There is nothing which gives more life "to a diſcourſe, than the taking away *(u)* "the connections and conjunctions; when the "diſcourſe is not bound together and embaraſs'd, "it walks and ſlides along of itſelf. Periods thus "cut off, and yet pronounc'd with precipitation, "are ſigns of a lively ſorrow; which at the ſame "time hinders, yet forces him to ſpeak."——

Again, in a like caſe.

"He ſpeaks ſhort, and in broken and in-

(*t*) Note on B. 10. Ver. 295.
(*u*) From *Longinus* de Subl. c. 17.

" terrupted periods, which excellently repre-
" ſent the agony of his thoughts.— After-
" wards we ſee he breaks out into interro-
" gations, which, as (x) Longinus obſerves,
" give great motion, ſtrength, and action to
" diſcourſe. If the Poet had proceeded ſimply,
" the expreſſion had not been equal to the oc-
" caſion; but by theſe ſhort queſtions, he gives
" ſtrength to it, and ſhews the diſorder of the
" ſpeaker, by the ſudden ſtarts and vehemence
" of the periods."

All theſe animated figures, all thoſe arts of expreſſing the paſſions, are beautifully wove into this ſingle piece of poetry: but there is one peculiar excellence in it yet behind, which I admire beyond all the reſt. It is a power almoſt unknown even to Poetry before, and the Criticks have not as yet found out any name for it. The extraordinary beauty I mean, is that inſight which the Poet gives his readers into Circe's mind: We look into her ſoul, and ſee the ideas paſs there in train. At firſt ſhe is ignorant; then dubious; and at laſt diſcovers gradually in her thoughts the character, and very name of the Hero. Circe, ſkill'd as ſhe was in all the arts of magick, is limited in her knowledge and diſcovery of things: and in the preſent diſcovery of the perſon of Ulyſſes, her mind acts with tumult and rapidity, but at the ſame time with a ſeries and gradual collection of truths, at firſt unknown. Every one may

(x) De Sull. c. 17.

perceive

perceive the tumult, and the ſucceſſive enlightnings of her mind. We are led into a full view of the ſhifting of her thoughts; and behold the various openings of them in her ſoul.

[you came?
What art thou? ſay, from whence, from whom
Or art thou He? the man to come foretold—
The man, from Troy?—
The man, for *Wiſdom*'s various arts renown'd,
Ulyſſes?———

I never read any thing which ſets the acting of another's mind ſo diſtinctly to the view. Circe's very thoughts are made viſible to us; they are ſet full before our eyes; and we ſee the different degrees as it were of light, breaking in upon her ſoul. — Every one muſt think this an extreme fine piece of poetry. For my own part, upon turning it every way, and conſidering all its ſeveral perfections, I believe one might venture to pronounce it the moſt finiſht piece, the moſt complete beauty in the whole tranſlation.

Theſe are the productions of a ſublime genius, and ſpeak an uncommon ſpirit, together with a firm extenſive judgment, and an exact ſenſe of things. But you, Antiphaus, chiefly complain of this writer for his refinements and elevation: there is too much of the Enflure, as the French call it, in his works; and you cannot bear with ſuch a profuſion of glitter and embroidery in the language. I do not deny, that the paſſages you repeated, are generally blameable

blameable on theſe accounts; but beg leave to produce ſome inſtances, which may ſhew the tranſlator to be a maſter in the juſt and proper ſtyle; as the former convince us of his excellence in the enlivened, and pathetick.

How humble are the lines in particular, (y) where Ulyſſes meets with Minerva in Ithaca, and how rural the (z) ſcene between him and Eumæus in that iſland? ſo far, that for my own part I muſt confeſs, I ſhou'd be more apt to imagine that Mr. Pope on theſe occaſions ſinks now and then into lowneſſes, and beneath the dignity of the Epic, than that he ſoars too high, or uſes any falſe elevation.

As for the juſt and chaſte manner of expreſſing things, it is very frequent in theſe paſſages: there is a place juſt come into my head, in which this very way of ſpeaking is deſcribed; the lines are cloſe and expreſſive; and, according to Mr. Pope's method in his incomparable Eſſay, are themſelves the beſt example of the thing they treat of; they are (zz) in the eighth book.

With partial hands the Gods their gifts diſpenſe;
Some greatly think, ſome ſpeak with manly ſenſe.
Here heav'n an elegance of form denies,
But wiſdom the defect of form ſupplies:

(y) B. 13. (z) B. 14.
(zz) Ver. 185. &c. 170.

This

This man with energy of thought controuls,
And ſteals with modeſt violence our ſouls;
He ſpeaks reſerv'dly, but he ſpeaks with force,
Nor can one word be chang'd but for a worſe.

The concluſion of Tireſias's ſpeech to Ulyſſes, I dare anſwer for it, you will think excellent in this way.

—Peaceful ſhalt thou end thy bliſsful days,
And ſteal thyſelf from life, by ſlow decays:
Unknown to pain, in age reſign thy breath,
When late ſtern Neptune points the ſhaft with death;
To the dark grave retiring as to reſt,
(a) Thy people bleſſing, by thy people bleſt.

By this we ſee, how Mr. Pope can enliven any thing of this kind with the greateſt juſtice as well as beauty: ſuch (to mention but one more) is that ſingle paſſage, as I take it, in all Homer's works, which deſcribes the regions of the bleſt. The lines are very beautiful in the original; and the tranſlation has expreſſed all the beauties of it in a lively proper fluency of verſe:

Elyſium ſhall be thine; the bliſsful plains
Of utmoſt earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns:
Joys ever-young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year.

(a) B. 11, 169. λ'. 136.

Stern

Stern winter ſmiles on that auſpicious clime;
The fields are florid with unfading prime:
From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy ſnow:
But from the breezy deep, the bleſt inhale
The fragrant murmurs of the weſtern gale.
This grace peculiar will the Gods afford
(*b*) To thee, the ſon of Jove, and beauteous Helen's [lord.

What can be more juſt and beautiful? The thought proper and adequate; the words glowing; and the language alive: To me, the verſes themſelves ſeem to run on with joy and pleaſure. The delightful ſoftneſs of thoſe lines in Homer,

Ἀλλ' ἀιεὶ ζεφύροιο λιγυπνείουσας ἀήτας
Ὠκεανὸς ἀνίησιν ἀναψύχειν ἀνθρώπους,

is diffus'd thro' the whole deſcription in the tranſlation; and the latter has the advantage of the original, in concluding with a full elaſtick line, that carries a ſpring with it; inſtead of the heavineſs of

——Καί σφιν γαμβρὸς Διὸς ἔσσι.

I entirely agree with you (ſays Antiphaus) as to the turn of the lines; 'tis very fine and vigorous: but methinks even in theſe, what anſwers the two particular Greek verſes you have

(*b*) B. 4, 776 δ'. 564 to 569.

repeated,

repeated, are too much flouriſh'd, and more remarkable for their ſound, than for any other idea they may give the mind.

I ſhall not ſtand with you for that couplet, anſwer'd Philypſus: what I chiefly admire is the general flow of the lines in the whole paſſage.

This manner of writing, Antiphaus, is very aſſiſtant in expreſſing the nature of the ſubject: and indeed, tho' Mr. Pope may ſometimes go too far in the florid and artificial, we may ſay in general, that he is a very natural writer. His imagination is lively, his colours ſtrong, and his hand maſterly in moſt of his ſtrokes. We ſhou'd loſe ourſelves in endeavouring to obſerve all that variety of beauties of this kind, which are to be found in his tranſlation: one point I have particularly admired in it; the poet's peculiar air, and happineſs in drawing landſcapes; eſpecially hanging woods, ſlopes, and precipices: Thus:

——High Ithaca o'erlooks the floods, [woods.
(d) Brown with o'er-arching ſhades, and pendent

What reader will be ſo unconcern'd, and ſo little taken with this proſpect, as Ulyſſes is repreſented to be in another part of the poem? For 'tis the ſame place, that we have a deſcription of afterwards, when we are told, That he

(d) B. 3, 96. ℣. 81.

——Deep

—Deep-muſing, o'er the mountains ſtray'd,
Thro' mazy thickets of the woodland ſhade,
And cavern'd ways, the ſhaggy coaſt along,
(*e*) With cliffs, and nodding foreſts over-hung.

In Ulyſſes's firſt adventures in Phæacia we are led on ſucceſſively, thro' ſeveral very beautiful deſcriptions. Firſt we have a (*f*) rocky coaſt, excellently pictur'd in two lines only: thence we are carried into a (*g*) thick dark wood, for that night. The next morning, we have a (*h*) view of the city: The firſt things which offer to the eye are the caſtle, and the ſenate-houſe, riſing above the other buildings; at a diſtance, acroſs the great road, appears the port with the ſhips at anchor, and their ſtreamers fluttering in the air: on the ſhore, juſt by the temple of Neptune, you ſee the Phæacians buſied in the dock, all in their ſeveral employments. After this view, you paſs thro' a (*i*) delicious range of groves and meadow-ground, up to the walls; while on this ſide (*k*) appear the gardens all in bloom; as the vineyards of Alcinous cloſe the ſcene on the other.

There can be nothing better imag'd, and more natural, than theſe deſcriptions are in Mr. Pope's tranſlation: they exceed even the original itſelf.

(*e*) B. 14. 4.
(*f*) B. 5. 520, 521. *i*. 402.
(*g*) B. 5, 613, to 622. *i*. 480.
(*h*) B. 6, 310, to 320. *ζ'*. 262, 269.
(*i*) B. 6, 350. *ζ'*. 291.
(*k*) B. 6, 335. *ζ'*. 293.

I beg

I beg leave to repeat another deſcription to you, which lies not ſo diffus'd as the former; 'tis one ſingle view of Calypſo's grotto; and what an exact and beautiful draught of it does it give us?

——A various ſylvan ſcene
Appears around, and groves of living green;
Poplars and alders ever quiv'ring play'd,
And nodding cypreſs form'd a fragrant ſhade;
On whoſe high branches, waving with the ſtorm,
The birds of broadeſt wing their manſion form,
(The chough, the ſea-mew, the loquacious crow)
And ſcream aloft, and ſkim the deeps below.
Depending vines the ſhelving cavern ſcreen,
With purple cluſters bluſhing thro' the green:
Four limped fountains from the cliff diſtil,
And ev'ry fountain pours a ſev'ral rill,
(*l*) In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill.

Nothing can be more beautiful to the eye, than theſe landſcapes are in the poem: they make every thing preſent to us; and agreeably deceive us into an imagination, that we (*m*) *actually ſee, what we only hear.* As the poet may improve all his circumſtances at pleaſure, what the criticks have obſerv'd in this caſe, is not ſo extravagant as one wou'd imagine; we really ſee things more fully and with greater delight

(*l*) B. 2, 92. *i.* 71.
(*m*) Τὴν ἀκοὴν ὄψιν ποιεῖ. *Longin.* περὶ Ὕψους. κς'.

in

in the poem, than we ſhou'd in the reality; the picture improves upon nature: and we might look on the proſpect itſelf with (*n*) *leſs pleaſure, than we hear it deſcribed.*

Whoever is ſhock'd at this, may be pleas'd to conſider *the cave of the nymphs*, in the thirteenth book: That alone may ſerve to ſhew, how largely circumſtances may be added, in deſcribing the works of nature, or in drawing poetical proſpects.

Mr. Pope ſhews an excellent hand in ſeveral other places; as in the firſt view of Circe's palace at a diſtance, and conſtantly in the appearance of land off at ſea.

Ulyſſes gives us an account of the former at his landing upon the iſland of that Goddeſs.

(*o*) From the high point I mark'd in diſtant view
A ſtream of curling ſmoke aſcending blue,
And ſpiry tops, the tufted trees above,
Of Circe's palace boſom'd in the grove.

The other is very frequent: take a deſcription or two of it, that come into my mind at preſent.

(*p*) Like diſtant clouds the mariner deſcries
Fair Ithaca's emerging hills ariſe.

(*n*) Κρεῖττον γίγνον ἀκουσθῆναι λεγόμενον, ἢ ὀφθῆναι γινόμενον. *Dionyſius Hal.* Περὶ Συνθέσεως. γ'

(*o*) B. 10, 173 κ'. 150.

(*p*) B. 13, 115. ν'. 95.

Again;

Again;

(q) The diſtant land appear'd—
Then ſwell'd to ſight Phæacia's duſky coaſt,
And woody mountains half in vapours loſt;
That lay before him, indiſtinct and vaſt,
Like a broad ſhield amid the watry waſte.

Nothing hath furniſh'd Homer (as well as Virgil) with ſuch a variety of natural images, as this element; and in nothing has Mr. Pope more finely copied his original. But all theſe beautiful pictures, are only pictures of *ſtill life*; this gentleman's excellency reaches farther; he is as maſterly in all his motions, and actions; he can teach his pencil to expreſs ideas yet in the mind, and to paint out the paſſions of the ſoul.

Sometimes we have all the imagery in motion: If a ſhip is to ſet ſail, the canvas ſwells to eye, the ſtreams float in the air, and the ſailors are all full of noiſe and buſineſs: You ſee the veſſel move on, and hear the ruſhing ſound of the water: You behold the rowers, drawing (r) *the oar to their broad breaſts*; and the different attitudes of them, as they (s) *bend*, or (t) *ſtretch* to the ſtroke.

(q) B. 5, 356. *i.* 279.
(r) B. 12, 183. *γ'.* 147.
(s) B. 12, 216.
(t) B. 12. 265.

At

(*u*) At once they bend and ſtrike their equal oars,
And leave the ſinking hills, and leſs'ning ſhores.

This idea of the land ſeeming to ſink and recede, is very beautifully added in another place, where we have the deſcription of a perſon driving, very ſwiftly, in a chariot: I believe you will hear the intire paſſage with pleaſure, as it is all very juſt and natural.

With haſty hand the ruling reins he drew:
He laſh'd the courſers, and the courſers flew.
Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held
Their equal pace, and ſmok'd along the field.
The tow'rs of Pylos ſink, its views decay,
Fields after fields fly back, till cloſe of day,
(*x*) Then ſunk the ſun, and darken'd all the way.

Again;

Along the waving fields their way they hold,
(*y*) The fields receding as the chariot roll'd.

Give me leave (interpos'd Antiphaus) to obſerve one thing by the way. Mr. Pope deviates here a little from the truth, and chuſes rather to ſhew the Poet, than the Antiquary. As I take it, the horſes in the chariots of the ancients were *not beneath the yoke.* Do not

(*u*) B. 13, 94. *v.* 78.
(*x*) B. 3, 618. *v.* 435.
(*y*) B. 3, 628. *v.* 495.

their

their medals, and all the pictures of them repreſent it otherwiſe? And does not the verſe here in the original, ſhew its poſition in reſpect of the horſes, very particularly and diſtinctly?

However this is a ſlip of a ſmall nature; and had the thing been expreſs'd in exact conformity to the Grecian faſhion in this particular, it might not have ſtruck the reader ſo ſtrongly, as it does now by its agreement with the preſent idea of the ſame thing.

I am not concerned, ſays Philypſus, either in defending, or giving up that particular: I only inſtance this paſſage, in general, for its expreſſiveneſs of ſuch an action, and of the ideas ariſing in the mind upon it: As to that end, I believe it will hold very well. The deſcription and ſentiment is very natural, (replied Antiphaus) I beg you to go on without obſerving any little breaks for the future, which may be occaſion'd by ſuch circumſtances, as do not affect the chief aim and deſign of a quotation.

If the Poet, proceeded Philypſus, can paint out the ideas in the mind with ſo much juſtice, as he appears to do by this inſtance; and more particularly by another mention'd before (of the ſucceſſive openings and unfolding of an unknown truth, in the mind of Circe) we ſhall find him to have been equally happy in expreſſing the paſſions of the ſoul. Something of this has been mention'd already, and almoſt an infinite variety of beauties of the ſame kind might be added. They abound every where in the tranſlation, and are generally well touch'd. But there is the deſcription of one paſſion in particular,

particular, which is preſerv'd throughout the whole piece: It is Ulyſſes his love for his country. Give me leave to repeat ſome of the firſt and laſt paſſages, in which it is expreſt. How ſtrongly does Minerva repreſent this, even in the very entrance of the poem? She ſays, the Hero is detain'd from Ithaca, by a Goddeſs (nothing human cou'd have forc'd him into ſo tedious an abſence; by a Goddeſs)

Who ſooths to dear delight his anxious mind—
Succeſsleſs all her ſoft careſſes prove,
To baniſh from his breaſt his country's love;
To ſee the ſmoke from his lov'd palace riſe,
While the dear Iſle in diſtant proſpect lies,
(z) With what *contentment wou'd he cloſe his eyes?*

The firſt appearance of the Hero is moſt excellently imagined. Calypſo has juſt receiv'd orders to detain Ulyſſes no longer from his country; ſhe finds him ſitting alone upon the rocks, the tears trickling down his cheeks, and his eyes fixt upon the ſea. It was thus that he paſs'd his hours, in the iſland of that Goddeſs. He conſtantly

In ſlumber wore the heavy night away;
On rocks and ſhores conſum'd the tedious day:
There ſat all deſolate, and ſigh'd alone,
With echoing ſorrows made the mountains groan,

(z) B. 1, 77. *d.* 59.

And

And roll'd his eyes o'er all the reſtleſs main,
(a) Till dimm'd with riſing grief, they ſtream'd again.

Pardon me, ſays Antiphaus; even here (tho' the paſſion be ſtrongly ſet out, yet) the language of the two paſſages, which you repeated laſt, is not intirely free from the old fault: That *ſoothing an anxious mind to dear delight*, falls ſhort of the plainneſs and energy of the original: — To make the *mountains groan with echoing ſorrow*, is yet more overwrought: —— And *the ſtreaming again of his eyes*, is not exactly right in the tranſlation, which does not mention his *weeping before*; at the ſame time that it varies from the original, which ſays, that he *never ceas'd from weeping*.

We meet with another image of this (reply'd Philypſus) in the evening before Ulyſſes ſets ſail for Ithaca; which, I believe, you will allow to be better expreſs'd. He was then in ſo delightful a place as the court of Alcinous. They had a multitude of diverſions there: the Phæacians were the happieſt people in the world; feaſts and entertainments, mirth, wine, and muſick, were the chief buſineſs of their lives. Ulyſſes appears among them with a quite different face: he looks like a creature of an higher make, of an order above them; and his mind is taken up with farther views, and other deſires.

(a) B. 5, 204. *i.* 154.

All

All, but Ulyſſes, heard with fixt delight:
He ſat, and ey'd the ſun, and wiſh'd the night;
Slow ſeem'd the ſun to move, the hours to roll,
(b) His native home deep-imag'd in his ſoul.

We are continually put in mind of this fondneſs of the Hero for his country: and in the laſt caſe, it is particularly fixt upon the reader by a very expreſſive (c) ſimile. We may imagine the ardency of Ulyſſes's love for his Ithaca, his own proper country, when we conſider his affection for the Greeks his countrymen in general. Upon an occaſional revival in his thoughts of the deſtructions and miſery they underwent before Troy, the Hero's diſſimulation (great as it was) is overcome; his paſſion breaks through every reſtraint: we immediately ſee him all in tears. This tenderneſs of his is painted in another ſimile, the moſt pathetick that can be conceived, and the moſt expreſſive of his affection for his countrymen.

——Ulyſſes' griefs renew;
Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew:
As ſome fond matron views in mortal fight
Her huſband falling in his country's right;
Frantick thro' claſhing ſwords ſhe runs, ſhe flies,
As ghaſtly pale he groans, and faints, and dies;
Cloſe to his breaſt ſhe grovels on the ground,
And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound;

(b) B. 13, 38 v'. 30.
(c) See Note on the Place.

She cries, she shrieks: the fierce insulting foe
Relentless mocks her violence of woe;
To chains condemn'd as wildly she deplores,
(d) A widow, and a slave, on foreign shores.

It would be endless to repeat every thing of this nature; there are a thousand sketches of it in the Odyssey. 'Tis sufficient at present to observe, that Mr. Pope generally gives them to us in very lively colours; and excels almost every where in the Pathetick. 'Tis certain, (says Antiphaus) that he has an excellent hand; his images, which you have set before me, are as strong as any of the works of the pencil. They are so, answered Philypsus; and on that account, you will pardon me for borrowing so many expressions from Painting in this case; 'tis unavoidable. The designs of Painting and Poetry are so united, that to me the Poet and the Painter seem scarcely to differ in any thing, except the mean they make use of, to arrive at one and the same end. Both are to express nature: but the materials of the one, are words and sound; of the other, figure and colours. Poetry can paint more particularly, more largely, and with greater coherence: Painting is the more concise, and emphatical. If *this* may excell in shewing one view distinctly, *that* can shew several in succession, without any manner of confusion. Any figure in Painting is confin'd to one attitude; but Poetry can give as great a

(d) B. 8. 580. &c. 530.

variety of motion and poſtures, as the reality itſelf. What ſeems a paradox of art in either, is their power of expreſſing two oppoſite paſſions in the ſame face. Of this ſort (among a multitude of like inſtances) is the mother of Lewis the thirteenth, in the gallery of Luxembourg; and every piece in that fine epiſode, which concludes the ſixth Iliad. In that picture the Queen's face ſtrongly expreſſes the pain and anguiſh of her condition, mix'd with a regard toward her ſon, full of the greateſt pleaſure and complacency. In the poem we have the greater variety, and each piece is perfectly juſt and finiſh'd. Hector ſhews a fierceneſs for the war, and a tenderneſs that inclines him to ſtay for a laſt interview; little Aſtyanax has a fondneſs and a terror in his eyes, at the ſight of his father; while Andromache's face is all ſoften'd into a tender ſmile; and, at the ſame time, wet with the tears that fall for her Hector.

I remember (ſays Antiphaus) it was to you that I was oblig'd for the firſt obſervation I ever met with, on theſe double paſſions. I have ſince read ſeveral things (in the Æneid, as well as in the works of Homer) with a pleaſure perfectly new, on account of the light you then gave me into this particular: and out of a thouſand places, that I have obſerv'd it in ſince, I know none more beautiful than that of Achæmenides in Virgil, which you mention'd to me the firſt time we ever talk'd of this ſubject.

That you know (reply'd Philypſus) to have been always my favourite: I have read it over in

in Dryden ſo frequently, that I believe I can now repeat you his tranſlation of it:

—From the woods there bolts, before our ſight,
Somewhat betwixt a mortal and a ſpright;
So thin, ſo ghaſtly meager, and ſo wan,
So bare of fleſh, he ſcarce reſembled man:
This thing, all tatter'd, ſeem'd from far t'implore
Our pious aid, and pointed to the ſhore.
We look behind; then view his ſhaggy beard;
His cloaths were tagg'd with thorns, and filth his [limbs beſmear'd:
The reſt in mien, in habit, and in face,
Appear'd a Greek; and ſuch indeed he was:
He caſt on us from far a frightful view,
Whom ſoon for Trojans and for foes he knew;
Stood ſtill, and paus'd; then, all at once, began
To ſtretch his limbs, and trembled as he ran;
Soon as approach'd, upon his knees he falls,
And thus with tears and ſighs for pity calls:
" Now by the pow'rs above, and what we ſhare
" From nature's common gift, this vital air,
(e) O Trojans, take me hence.—

'Tis but too evident (continued Philypſus) that Mr. Dryden falls as much ſhort of (f)

(e) *Dryd.* Tranſlat. Æn. 3, 788.
(f) Æn. 3, 592.
— Subito è ſylvis macie confecta ſuprema,
noti nova forma viri, miſerandaque cultu
cedit, ſupplexque manus ad litora tendit——
——Ubi Dardanios habitus & Troia vidit
ma procul; paullum aſpectu conterritus *hæſit*,
tinuitque gradum: mox *ſeſe ad litora præceps*
n fletu precibuſque *tulit*.——

Virgil in the chief turn that relates to our pre-
ſent purpoſe, as Virgil has exceeded that (*g*)
paſſage in the Iliad, which might poſſibly hav
given him the hint for drawing this admirabl
image.

This diſtraction of Achæmenides between ſe
veral paſſions at once, puts me in mind of th
dubiouſneſs and ſhifting of thoughts, which i
illuſtrated in Homer by a very apt and expre
ſive ſimile; than which (ſays Mr. Pope) "Ther
" (*b*) is ſcarce any thing, in the whole com
" paſs of nature, that can more exactly repre
" ſent the ſtate of an irreſolute mind, waver
" ing between two different deſigns; ſome
" times inclining to the one, ſometimes to th
" other, and then moving to that point to whic
" its reſolution is at laſt determin'd."

As when old Ocean's ſilent ſurface ſleeps,
The waves juſt heaving on the purple deeps;
While yet th' expected tempeſt hangs on high,
Weighs down the cloud, and blackens in the ſky,
The maſs of waters will no wind obey:
Jove ſends one guſt, and bids them roll away.
While wav'ring counſels thus his mind engage,
Fluctuates in doubtful thought the Pylian ſage;
To join the hoſt, or to the Gen'ral haſte,
(*i*) Debating long, he fixes on the laſt.

(*g*) Il. κ'. 358.
(*b*) Note on Il. 14, 21.
(*i*) Iliad 14, 30.

Th

There is ſomething of this *mixture of paſſions*, (and thoſe too the moſt beautiful in this caſe, I mean of oppoſite paſſions) in that line of Miltion, where ſays that death

Grinn'd horrible a ghaſtly ſmile.—

One wou'd almoſt be perſuaded, that Homer is the laſt reſort of all the fineſt thoughts in poetry; for this likewiſe ſeems to have been copied from him, tho' it fails very much (as to the point in hand) both of the original, and of Mr. Pope's tranſlation of it.——— Juno makes a very mutinous ſpeech in an aſſembly of the deities: the infection took, as much as ſhe could deſire: and that ſucceſs, provok'd and inflam'd as ſhe was, forced her to be ſomewhat pleaſed, in ſpite of herſelf: upon this ſhe ſhews a ſort of (*k*) uneaſy ſatisfaction, in ſuch a ſmile, as Ovid (*l*) gives to his Envy in the Metamorphoſis.

To ſee the gath'ring grudge in ev'ry breaſt,
Smiles on her lips a ſpleenful joy expreſt;
While on her wrinkled front, and eye-brow bent,
(*m*) Sat ſtedfaſt care, and low'ring diſcontent.

There are many things in Virgil's fourth Æneid, which might be produc'd on this occa-

(*k*) Il. 6. 103.
(*l*) Riſus abeſt; niſi quem viſi movere dolores. B. 2. 778.
(*m*) Pope's Iliad, B. 15, 113.

ſion: but 'tis more to our preſent ſubject to conſider that part of the Odyſſey, from which ſome of its fineſt ſtrokes are borrowed. Calypſo, when ſhe accquaints our Hero with the deſign of his departure from her iſland; upon his doubting her ſincerity, ſwears very ſolemnly, that her reſolutions are real: the next moment, ſhe falls into a ſpeech full of inſinuations and arguments to detain him: both theſe ſpeeches may rather be ſaid to be enliven'd and improv'd, than to be well tranſlated by Mr. Pope; this only wou'd be too narrow a commendation of them.——The firſt runs thus:

How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wiſe!
But hear, oh earth, and hear, ye ſacred ſkies!
And thou, oh Styx! whoſe formidable floods
Glide thro' the ſhades, and bind th' atteſting Gods;
No form'd deſign, no meditated end
Lurks in the counſel of thy faithful friend;
Kind the perſuaſion, and ſincere my aim;
The ſame my practiſe, were my fate the ſame.
Heav'n has not curſt me with a heart of ſteel,
(*n*) But giv'n the ſenſe to pity, and to feel.

One wou'd think now that the Goddeſs was to do nothing but adviſe about his voyage, and the conveniences for it: but her paſſions immediately veer about; and the very next page,

(*n*) B. 5, 246. *i.* 191.

the

the very next time ſhe ſpeaks, 'tis all in a ſtrain intirely oppoſite to what ſhe has been ſaying in this:

Ulyſſes! (with a ſigh ſhe thus began)
O ſprung from Gods! in wiſdom more than man!
Is then thy home the paſſion of thy heart?
Thus wilt thou leave me? are we thus to part?
Farewel! and ever joyful mayſt thou be;
Nor break the tranſport with one thought of me.
But ah, Ulyſſes! wert thou giv'n to know
What fate yet dooms thee, yet, to undergo,
(o) Thy heart might ſettle in this ſcene of eaſe, &c.

I muſt not forget here, that one of the fineſt of the modern Italian Poets has expreſs'd this mixture of oppoſite paſſions, on an occaſion which is attended with ſuch a circumſtance as exceeds any of the other: the particular in which he ſhews it, ſhews at the the ſame time the ſwiftneſs of the intervening paſſion; and expreſſes the ſtrongeſt of any, how immediately one flow of ſpirits ſucceeds upon a former and quite contrary emotion. Armida, deſerted by her Rinaldo, breathes nothing but fury and revenge; ſhe purſues him in the heat of the battle; forgetful of her former paſſion, ſhe aims an arrow at his heart: but ſee, while it is yet in its flight, how the paſſions vary on her face! her rage and fury ſoften into tenderneſs, and apprehenſion of his danger! in an inſtant her love is too ſtrong for her reſentment: in an in-

(o) B. 265, ſ. 208.

ſtant, ſhe dreads leſt her deſign ſhould be effectual, and longs to be diſappointed in her aim:

(p) Swift flies the ſhaft: as ſwiftly flies her pray'r,
That all its vehemence be ſpent in air.

How finely are the paſſions blended in this piece! The tranſition from the extremity of fury to an exceſs of love, is manag'd in ſuch a manner, as to be wholly imperceptible: as when two colours are loſt in the ſhades of each other, the eye is agreeably deceived; and we are delighted with the delicacy of their union, tho' unable to diſcover where one commences, or the other ends.

In this particular there is not any thing that can equal Poetry, or bear to be compared with it, except its ſiſter art of Painting; that might copy every inſtance I have mention'd here. And certainly what makes ſo beautiful a figure in the fineſt Poets, might deſerve the imitation of the beſt Painters. Was not the Dolon and Calypſo of Homer worthy the hand of Zeuxis or Apelles? Wou'd not the Aruns and Achæmenides of Virgil have been a fine deſign even for Corregio or Raphael to have work'd upon? If our Shakeſpear can give us the ſtruggle of paſſions in the breaſt of Coriolanus, Wall might trace the ſame, and ſpeak them as well with his pencil: and if Corneille has ſtrongly expreſs'd the contrary deſires of the

(p) Lo ſtral *volo*; ma *con loſtrale* un volò
Subito uſcì, che vada il colpo a voto.
Taſſo's Ger. Lib. Cant. 20. *St.* 6[illegible]
ſiſſi[illegible]

ſiſter of the Curiatii; his countryman Le Brun might have had a much finer ſubject in the various paſſions of the Sabines, ruſhing in amidſt the two contending armies, to prevent thoſe fatal conſequences, in which the victory of either party muſt neceſſarily involve them.

But what I have often thought of as one of the fineſt ſubjects of this kind, either for poetry or painting, is the firſt Brutus on the judicial-ſeat, juſt before the act of giving ſentence on his own ſons, for their treachery to the common-wealth. What a noble ſtrife was there between natural affection, and the love of one's country? between duty, and deſire? between common humanity, and the ſpirit (perhaps the pride) of a Roman? What a fine group of figures wou'd the ſuppliants for the criminals compoſe in ſuch a piece? On one ſide of the tribunal, the wife of the judge and mother of the offenders, and all the relations divided in the ſame manner between a deſire of moving pity, and an abhorrence of the very crime for the pardon of which they wou'd intercede: the people of Rome, on the other ſide, with looks full of mixt paſſions; ſome ſtruck with pity, amidſt all their ſeverity; ſome almoſt condemning, and yet approving at the ſame time, the rigid juſtice of the father; while others commiſerate the youth of the ſons, and ſeem incens'd at the unnatural impartiality of the judge.

'Tis a misfortune, that Virgil's hand was with-held from launching farther (*q*) where he

(*q*) Æn. 6, 821.

touch'd upon this ſubject: but it would be well made up to us, if any eminent perſon in the other art wou'd undertake it: it might certainly make a finiſht piece; and Painting in this particular wou'd have the advantage of Poetry, as it could expreſs this mixture of paſſions directly, and wou'd ſtrike the mind with them in their proper union, all at once; whereas, when taken from the poetical picture, the combination is not ſo eaſy; and we ſcarce ever conceive it ſo cloſely as we ought.

Were you to give me full ſcope, I ſhou'd carry the reſemblance between theſe arts much farther than it has ever yet been carried. There is perhaps ſcarce a *figure* or *manner* in poetry which I ſhou'd not imagine to have its tally in the ſchools of the painters: I could find it even in the very next point, which comes in my way, in the *emphatical*. Natural deſcriptions, as they are pictures which take in the various circumſtances of a place or action, give us generally ſeveral groups of finiſht figures: this, on the contrary, is a way of expreſſing nature in poetry, not unlike ſketches and firſt draughts in painting: and as the lines in ſketches are fewer, but more animated; this muſt be always conciſe, and very expreſſive.

There are ſeveral maſterly ſtrokes of the emphatical kind in the Odyſſey: ſuch is that ſpeech of Telemachus, where he ſays,

Prepar'd I ſtand. He was but born to try
(*p*) The *lot* of man: *To ſuffer, and to die.*

Such

Such is Circe's whole ſpeech (*q*) which I repeated to you before, on account of its being ſo pathetical. Such, in an high degree is the firſt rencounter of the Hero with that Goddeſs.

Hence to thy fellows (dreadful ſhe began)
(*r*) Go, be a beaſt.—I heard; and yet was man.

This manner is neceſſary in all ſententious paſſages, and moral reflections; 'tis often ſtrong in expreſſing the paſſions: and peculiarly uſeful in the ſublime. Take an inſtance of each, from Mr. Pope.

(*s*) —Pirates and conquerors, of harden'd mind,
The foes of peace, and ſcourges of mankind,
To whom offending men are made a prey,
When Jove in vengeance gives a land: away
Ev'n theſe, when of their ill-got ſpoils poſſeſs'd,
Find ſure tormentors in the guilty breaſt:
Some voice of God cloſe whiſp'ring from within,
"Wretch! this is villainy, and this is ſin."

The reflection upon ſeeing Agamemnon in Hades, is of this kind.

(*p*) B. 3, 119. γ'. 95, 96.
(*q*) B. 10, 387 to 392.
(*r*) B. 10, 382. κ'. 321.
(*s*) B. 14, 110. ξ'. 88.

(*t*) Now all Atrides is an empty ſhade!

Juſt after Atrides ſpeaks thus paſſionately in the account of his own death, by the treachery of Ægiſthus:

(*u*) But not with me the direful murder ends:
Theſe, Theſe expir'd! — Their crime, they were [my friends.

In the ſublime, nothing can be higher than the language of his Gods, Neptune and Jupiter:

(*x*) If ſuch thy will—We will it, Jove replies.

This latter is that ſhort full way of expreſſion, ſo frequent in (*y*) Virgil and (*z*) Homer, copied perhaps by both from the admired example of it in (*a*) Moſes, and grown ſince into an (*b*) axiom among the Criticks. It is the more to be commended in Mr. Pope, becauſe the turn he gives the line, is perfectly his own. Indeed in every one of theſe inſtances, as I take it, the chief of their ſtrength and emphaſis is owing to the improvements in the tranſlation.

(*t*) B. 11, 490. λ'. 392.
(*u*) B. 11, 512. λ'. 412.
(*x*) B. 13, 177. ν'. 154.
(*y*) B. Naviget Æn. 4, 237.
(*z*) Ἀπόπεμπε. Od. ε. 146.
(*a*) The great Fiat.
(*b*) Πᾶς ὁ δεσπότης δούλῳ μονοσύλλαβος. *Dem. Phal.* ζ'.

Anti-

Antiphaus cou'd ſcarce imagine, that theſe were all clear improvements upon Homer: he immediately conſulted the paſſages in the original; and was ſurpriz'd to find, how far they fell ſhort of the tranſlation; eſpecially in the lines that anſwer Circe's threat, and the complaint of Agamemnon. I am pleas'd (ſays he) beyond meaſure, in conſulting theſe parts of the poem, to ſee how much ſtrength and force there is added to them; have you not obſerv'd more inſtances of this kind? impart them to me, good Philypſus: 'tis no matter for method or regularity; give them to me immediately.—Had I time (anſwer'd Philypſus) I cou'd find out ſeveral other places which have all their proper improvements; at preſent, I ſhall refer you to the beginning of Menelaus his ſpeech to Telemachus in the fourth Odyſſey; Neſtor's (*c*) in the third; and in the tenth, the ſpeeches between Ulyſſes and Circe.——I was going to point out ſome paſſages in the (*d*) *Deſcent into Hell*: but 'tis difficult to ſingle out particular beauties from that book; the whole of it is ſo excellently tranſlated, and (I believe I may ſay) ſo generally improv'd.

The mentioning Circe juſt now, puts me in mind of another paſſage: 'tis where Homer deſcribes the metamorphoſis of the companions of Ulyſſes. They had (ſays he) the ſhape and the voice of beaſts, (*e*) *but their mind remain'd*

(*c*) V. 125. γ'. 103.
(*d*) Book 11.
(*e*) κ'. 240. Αυταρ νοῦς ἔην μπεδος, ὡς τὸ πάρος περ.

firm

firm and unalter'd: this Mr. Pope improves into the following lines:

(*f*) Still curſt with ſenſe, their mind remains alone,
And their own voice affrights them when they groan.

The addition here is very natural, and full of beauty; in ſuch changes, particularities of this kind ſtrike us very much: Virgil touches them on a like occaſion (*g*) with his uſual happineſs; and (*h*) Ovid, who has ſhewn a particular talent for ſuch ſubjects, has left us the very ſame thought with this of Mr. Pope.

I remember that Mr. Pope appear'd to me, upon my firſt reading his tranſlation, to have improv'd much upon the original in his poetical repetitions of ſame word, the figure in which he is moſt frequent. Thus is it us'd in the following lines:

A ſcene, where if a God ſhou'd caſt his ſight,
(*i*) A God might gaze, and wander with delight.
(*k*) Never, never wicked man was wiſe.

'Tis yet more beautiful, when the repetition holds farther; as in this paſſage:

(*f*) B. 10, 281.

(*g*) ——— Quamvis collo timuiſſet aratrum,
Et ſæpe in lævi quæſiſſet cornua fronte. *Ecl.* 6, 51.

(*h*) ————Conata queri, mugitus edidit ore,
Pertimuitque ſonos, *propriaque exterrita voce eſt.*
Met. 1, 638.

(*i*) B. 5, 96. *l.* 73.

(*k*) B. 2, 300. *l.* 882.

(*l*) Tranſ-

(*l*) Tranſported with the ſong, the liſt'ning train
Again with loud applauſe demand the ſtrain:
Again Ulyſſes veil'd his penſive head,
Again unmann'd, a ſhow'r of ſorrow ſhed.

This ſometimes gives an additional ſolemnity, and riſes ſtronger and ſtronger each line:

Celeſtial as thou art, yet ſtand deny'd:
Or ſwear that oath, by which the Gods are ty'd;
Swear, in thy ſoul no latent frauds remain,
(*m*) *Swear*, by the vow which never can be vain.

This is ſometimes carried yet farther; and in Virgil particularly there is a fine inſtance of this ſort of repetition (*n*) being doubled.

But in nothing is this figure more beautiful, than in the (*o*) *Siren's ſong*: that piece of ancient muſick is greatly enliven'd in the tranſlation; the whole flows on in a peculiar harmony, and the chorus is very happily added in the concluſion of it:

Celeſtial muſick warbles from their tongue,
And thus the ſweet deluders tune the ſong.
O, *ſtay*, *oh pride of* Greece! Ulyſſes, *ſtay!*
O ceaſe thy courſe, and liſten to our lay!

(*l*) B. 8, 90. *v.* 92.
(*m*) B. 10, 410. *x.* 343. μέγαν ὅρκον ὄμοσσαι.
(*n*) Sævus amor docuit natorum ſanguine *matrem*
Commaculare manus; *Crudelis* tu quoque, mater:
Crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?
Improbus ille puer; crudelis tu quoque mater, *Ecl.* 8 *v.* 50.
(*o*) B. 12, 220. *v.* 184.

Bleſt

Bleſt is the man ordain'd our voice to hear,
The ſong inſtructs the ſoul, and charms the ear.
Approach! thy ſoul ſhall into raptures riſe!
Approach! and learn new wiſdom from the wiſe.
We know whate'er the Kings of mighty name
Atchiev'd at Ilion in the field of Fame;
Whate'er beneath the ſun's bright journey lies.
O ſtay, and learn new wiſdom from the wiſe!

The peculiar juſtice and propriety of this, i the manner in which theſe Goddeſſes apply t Ulyſſes *(p)*; by offering him knowledge; a thing the moſt appoſite to their own complexion; and a motive, the moſt likely to obtain upon that Hero. There is a great deal of taſte and judgment ſhewn in improving ſo finely upon this circumſtance; but what runs through the whole, is that muſical enliven'd turn of the verſes. This is the happineſs, which of all things I admire in Mr. Pope: either in proſe, or verſe, he has the fineſt flow that can be imagin'd. I have often heard a very good Critick ſay, That *whenever he is reading any proſe of Mr. Pope's, he cannot help thinking that he ſhould never have wrote any thing elſe: and whenever he reads his verſes, he is angry with him for loſing any time from them, for proſe.* How often has the ſame gentleman apply'd to this writer thoſe lines in Milton, in which he ſpeaks of the firſt Poet as well as the firſt of Men?

(*p*) See note on the place.

Such

——(q) Such prompt eloquence
Flows from his lips: in proſe or num'rous verſe
More tuneable, than needed lute or harp
To add more ſweetneſs.——

There are a multitude of other paſſages, which deſerve to be mention'd on account of the fine Repetitions in them: theſe are what fell into my thoughts at preſent; and you have them in the ſame ſcatter'd manner, that they appear there. But one method of improvement in this tranſlation, I took particular notice of, and in that, I can be a little more full and diſtinct.

Mr. Pope has a very great happineſs in tranſplanting beauties. He often guides his tranſlation of Homer by ſome fine thought, or good expreſſion in ſome other eminent writer; and this has been the occaſion of ſeveral improvements in that work.

Have you never obſerv'd how he intermixes the elegance of Virgil, with the majeſty of Homer? There are two (r) ſpeeches of Circe, which have much of the air of that of Proteus in the fourth Georgick, and that of the Sybil's in the ſixth Æneid. The ſpeech of (s) Tireſias is improv'd from another of the Sybil, ſo alſo is the prophetical ſpeech in the (t) ſecond Odyſſey.

There are ſeveral imitations (in a ſhorter compaſs) of natural images introduc'd into Homer from the ſame treaſury. Thus the following lines:

(q) Paradiſe loſt, B. 5, 152.
(r) B. 10, 385.
(s) B. 11, 130. Æn. 6, 87, &c.
(t) Ver. 203.

Down-

(u) Down-ſunk the heavy beaſt.
(x) *Læſtrigonia*'s gates ariſe diſtinct in air.
(y) —The ſhores like miſts ariſe.
(z) And all above is ſky, and ocean all around, &c.

Although the tranſlator adds theſe fine ſtrokes from other hands, they are brought in ſo naturally, that they ſeem to ſpring out of Homer's ſentiment: and if an inſtance or two ſhou'd be found among them which may vary a little from the original, it is only to add ſome appoſite thought, that is not only finer, but at the ſame time perfectly agreeable to the ſubject. In ſuch caſes a tranſlator may demand the greater liberty of enlarging: as a flattering reſemblance is is always allow'd to painters. I like that very ingenious friend of your's, who calls the French tranſlation of Tacitus, *La belle infidelle:* that piece, you know, tho' not very preciſe and conſtant to its author, is the more beautiful, and the more engaging.

However 'tis ſeldom that Mr. Pope varies much in theſe additional beauties; his tranſlation is generally faithful, even where it improves upon Homer: and he keeps the chief mark ſteadily in his eye, tho' at the ſame time it admits the ſide-glances of light, from other objects. Thus you will ſcarce ever find him deviating from his author in ſuch caſes: tho' this

(u) B. 14, 572.
(x) B. 10, 93. Æn. 3, 206.
(y) B. 12, 201.
(z) B. 12, 474. Æn. 3, 193.

manner

manner of improving him by imitation from others is vaſtly frequent; and often ſo plain, that one may trace it thro' whole ſcenes together: in particular, I cou'd almoſt imagine that Mr. Pope read over the Eclogues of Virgil, before he ſet about that part of the ſtory, which lies between Ulyſſes and Eumæus; and I fancy at leaſt that I can trace the ſame paſtorals in almoſt every rural ſcene in this piece. If I am miſtaken in this, 'tis the (z) reſemblance of their beauties, which has deceiv'd me.

Sometimes we find the diction beautified by ſuch reſemblances, or the ſentiment improv'd from other hands. From the (a) *ſacred writings* frequently; from parallel places in (b) Homer himſelf; from Virgil, Horace, &c. among the ancients; and from (c) ſeveral of the moſt celebrated moderns. In his ſpeeches, we meet with improvements from the examples and rules of the orators of old; and many from our own dramatick pieces. It wou'd not be difficult, for a man of good taſte, to diſcern the

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(a) From *Virgil*, B. 14, 76. B. 5, 96. See alſo B. 2, 26. Æn. 3, 97. B. 2, 55. B. 3, 126. B. 4, 509. B. 6, 120, 197. B. 7, 99. B. 9, 313, 524. B. 10, 190, 226, 569. B. 11, 433, 434. &c.

(b) *Scripture*, B. 1, 483. B. 3, 424, 451. B. 4, 145, 488. B. 5, 288. B. 6, 235. B. 10, 591. B. 11, 239. B. 14, 109. And frequently in other places.

(c) *Iliad*, B. 11, 415. Il. β'. 41, &c.
Ovid, B. 4, 808. B. 10, 282. B. 13, 193. B. 14, 224.
Seneca, B. 5. 573.
Horace, B. 10, 516, 556, 557. B. 14, 519.

(d) *Dryden*, B. 5, 80. B. 11, 531, &c.
Milton, B. 9, 66, B. 10, 331. B 11, 725, &c.

air

air ſometimes of Dryden, ſometimes of (d) Shakeſpear, and at others of Otway, among the ſpeeches in the Odyſſey. But to go no farther, if you pleaſe only to compare ſome of the ſhorter paſſages with the original, you will eaſily ſee how much they are improv'd by taking in theſe ſide-lights.

Antiphaus, upon conſulting the paſſages, as Philypſus pointed them out to him, at firſt did not think they deſerv'd ſo much commendation; but when he came to compare the original lines from the Odyſſey, with thoſe of Mr. Pope, he was convinc'd of their beauty: it delighted him to ſee, what foundation the original gave for ſuch a turn, and yet how new that turn was in the tranſlation; he found almoſt in every one of them ſome addition for the better, and ſcarce in any a deviation from the ſenſe of Homer: it was Homer's ſenſe, but the expreſſion of it was improv'd. I thank you, (ſays he turning to Philypſus) I thank you for this clearer view you have given me of the beauties of this tranſlation: beſide theſe laſt, how many things have you repeated to me that are extremely juſt, pure, cloſe, and emphatical! how many perfectly true and natural? how many handſomely beautified and enlivened! what pictures of things? what deſcriptions of actions? and what beautiful expreſſions, both of the thoughts, and of the paſſions of the ſoul? In a word, what improvements, in ſome

(e) *Shakeſpear*, B. 9, 420. B. 10, 410, &c.

ſtrokes

ſtrokes, upon the greateſt genius of the world? ——Yes, added Philypſus, upon the greateſt genius of the world, aſſiſted by the native uſe of the moſt noble, and moſt poetical of all languages. Then, were we to conſider the inconveniences on the other ſide; the general difficulties of tranſlation, and the difficulty of this in particular: how hard is it for a Poet to keep up his ſpirit and flame in another's work? and how natural to flag in repreſenting thoughts not our own? To maintain the vigour of language, and the poetic warmth thorough ſo long a work, and to expreſs the ſoul of Homer, what a genius does it require? what ſpirit wou'd not ſink under ſo large an undertaking? Yet does Mr. Pope hitherto ſuſtain his character in a handſome, equal manner; and we may ſafely promiſe ourſelves the ſame of the remaining part of this work: as he enter'd upon this ſtage with the greateſt expectations of all men, I doubt not but he will leave it with univerſal applauſe.

But however excellent his performance is in the whole, I own with you that it has its faults, the common marks of humanity: yes, my Antiphaus, you convinc'd me the former evening, that it is unadvoidable for the greateſt genius not to fail ſometimes. For my part, (ſays Antiphaus) I ſhall make no apologies for the freedoms with which I then us'd this excellent writer: any thing of that kind might look odd to you from one, whoſe conſtant ſentiment you know to be this, that the kindeſt way of commending a writer, is to find fault with him now and then,

then, at proper intervals. Does not this evince an impartiality in your views, and add an air of ſincerity and juſtice to thoſe commendations, which you give him? Your Criticks, who extol a man univerſally, and will not be ſatisfied with any thing under a perfect character, without any the leaſt defect, are a kind of romantick Criticks; they are rather making an Hero, than deſcribing a Man: they give you a picture of ſomething, which exiſts no-where but in their own minds: and a complete Poet, according to their repreſentations of ſuch, will after all be only (what the Earl of Mulgrave calls it)

A faultleſs monſter, which the world ne'er ſaw.

Very true, ſays Philypſus; that ſort of Criticks fail as much on one hand, as our more modern Criticks have exceeded uſually on the other: indeed the former err on the good-natur'd ſide; yet both of them are very much to blame: for as it ſhews a miſchievous ſort of frenzy to ſtart errors, where there are really none; ſo an obſtinacy not to ſee faults where they are very evident, requires either a good degree of ignorance, or a moſt inveterate fondneſs.

I am intirely of your opinion, ſays Antiphaus; and ſince I find you in ſuch a temper for it, I cou'd almoſt offer to ſhew you ſome farther remarks on that ſide of the queſtion.——Have you any other then? (ſays Philypſus.) A few, anſwered Antiphaus; but I beg one evening

more

more on this topick. At preſent I ſhall only add my wiſhes, that we may conſtantly uſe this fair method, in reading any of the celebrated pieces, which come out among us: Let us keep up the true balance, and not ſuffer ourſelves to be prejudic'd, either by too great fondneſs, or too violent diſlike. This is the great rule of ancient Criticiſm: *Always to keep our hearts open to the beauties of a poem; and never to ſhut our eyes againſt the defects of it.*

AN

ESSAY

ON

Mr. *Pope*'s ODYSSEY.

EVENING III.

ALMOST all the next day Philypſus was taken up in reflecting on what had been ſaid at the cloſe of their laſt meeting: he began to be not ſo uneaſy as uſual, in thinking that the faults of a favourite Poet were to be lookt into that evening; he did not value Mr. Pope leſs than formerly, but he was thoroughly convinced that there was not ſo much of ſeverity in this method, as he had once imagin'd. "No, (ſays he to himſelf) let us view impartially, that we may rationally admire: where before

I was immediately in love with his beauties, and fond of the work, I now feel an equal pleaſure, and an equal eſteem; but it is in a different manner: I now ſeem to ſee the cauſes that move me to be pleas'd with thoſe fine paſſages, and feel a more juſt and manly ſatisfaction in them: 'Tis true, the ſoul is not hurried away with that vehemence of delight, as formerly; but the agreeable ſenſe I now have from them, is both more refin'd, and more laſting. How much is this rational way of admiring to be preferr'd to the common, vulgar, paſſionate one? This is as a flaſh of lightning; but the other is like the light of the day: 'tis a ſerene, diffus'd, ſteady light, which at the ſame time that it diſcovers all objects to us, is itſelf the moſt beautiful of any."

But then (continued he) how blind was I to the defects of this Poet? Has not Antiphaus ſhewn me ſeveral, which before I had no ſenſe of, and which now appear evidently to be ſuch? Indeed that over-ſight was more excuſable in reading the works of this celebrated writer, than it would have been in any other: reaſon may well loſe ſomething of her liberty, when ſhe is taken up with an object every way ſo agreeable and engaging: however, for the future, I reſolve to keep myſelf obſtinately from being over-pleas'd with any thing; and to read his, as all other the beſt pieces, in ſpite of all their beauty, by that rule which Antiphaus has laid down.

With theſe thoughts he open'd the tranſlation which lay on his deſk; and was very buſy in conſidering it, when company came in, and inter-

interrupted him for that night. The next day he employ'd himſelf in the ſame manner; this ſort of view was new to him, and of courſe the more agreeable: ſometimes he met with a line or two, that diſguſted him a little; but much more frequently was he ſtruck with the beauties of the Poem; and thoſe he enjoy'd with a full delight, as he found that delight to be rational and juſt. This ſearch drew him on ſtrangely; he did not know how to leave off: and tho' Antiphaus ſtay'd for the evening before he wou'd diſturb him, he found him ſtill cloſely employ'd at it: "My Philypſus, (ſays he) I'm glad to ſee you engag'd thus in the Odyſſey: what new light ſhall we have into the excellencies of this writer? Have not you been collecting other beauties out of the tranſlation? I have met with ſeveral other, reply'd Philypſus: ſo many indeed, that it wou'd be almoſt endleſs to collect them. But to tell you the truth, my buſineſs was quite contrary to what you imagine: I was upon a more difficult taſk; I was endeavouring to find what faults I cou'd diſcover in it. That is by much the more difficult, ſays Antiphaus: the few faults of that piece are ſcarce diſernible among ſuch a ſuperior number of beauties: how ſeldom do we perceive the diſagreeableneſs of a ſingle feature in a face that is very taking in the whole? Well, but have you been able to overcome this difficulty? Can you diſcover any thing farther of this kind in the Odyſſey? Very little, anſwer'd Philypſus: there is but one point yet, which has afforded me any number of inſtances: and that is a fault directly op-

poſite to what you particularly inſiſted on in our firſt converſation on this ſubject.

It was then, you know, that we conſider'd ſeveral points in which Mr. Pope appears to elevate and flouriſh too much: have you never obſerv'd, on the contrary, that there are a few *lowneſſes*, in his writings; and that he ſometimes ſinks into a diction, which borders upon the mean and vulgar? I have, reply'd Antiphaus, in ſome few lines: but if you have made any remarks of that kind, I beg rather to ſee thoſe of your obſervation.

The two friends were always ready to comply with the deſires of each other: Philypſus, as uſual, without prefacing or debating the matter, immediately ſhew'd him the following lines:

(a) A gallant leader, and—*a man I lov'd.*

(b) The old man early roſe, walk'd forth, and ſat
On poliſht ſtone before his palace gate.

(c) Or has hell's queen an empty image ſent,
That wretched I might ev'n my joys lament?

(d) Struck at the word, my very heart was dead.

(e) Euryclea, who, great Ops, thy lineage ſhar'd,
And watch'd all night, all day: a faithful guard.

(a) B. 10, 259. κ'. 225.
(b) B. 3, 523. γ'. 405.
(c) B. 11, 258. λ'. 212.
(d) B. 10, 588. κ'. 496.
(e) B. 2, 393. β. 345.

(f) They

(f) They led me to a good man, and a wiſe.
(g) And ſure he will, for wiſdom never lyes.

In the note upon this line (ſays Philypſus) we have a couplet repeated from the Iliad, which, I fear, is of the ſame ſtamp.

(h) Who dares think one thing, and another tell;
My ſoul deteſts him as the gates of hell.

I muſt confeſs, ſays Antiphaus, that the lines you have repeated, carry a mean air with them; but poſſibly what looks like a fault, may really be a beauty in ſome of them.

Some ſubjects require a ſimplicity of ſtile: beſide Mr. Pope is to follow Homer; and ſhould he uſe an humble ſtile in theſe places, even to appearance improperly, yet one ſhou'd be apt to look upon it as a ſufficient juſtification of his tranſlator.

For my part (reply'd Philypſus) I have always thought, that there is a wide difference between an *humble* and a *mean* ſtile; but, not to urge any thing of that kind, in the greater part of the inſtances juſt repeated, I am certain, there is not a ſufficient likeneſs between the manner of the original and the tranſlation.

I ſhall only except the two laſt, which are indeed plain and proverbial in the Greek. There is a ſimplicity, as Mr. Pope tells us in his notes, a noble ſimplicity, in the diction; and which, in my opinion, is not equally kept up in the Engliſh: but thoſe I ſhall not inſiſt upon.

(f) B. 14. 392, ξ'. 359.
(g) B. 3, 523. γ'. 20.
(h) Iliad 9, 412. ι. 331.

As for the reſt, that mean cloſe of the firſt of theſe lines, is in Homer an (*i*) handſome ſentiment, deliver'd in a ſounding verſe; and the meaneſt expreſſion in the ſecond, (*k*) is poetical in the original. The ſame will hold, in ſome degree, of the other lines.

Indeed where Homer leads the way, the caſe is very different: I cannot ſay how far it might be juſtifiable, to blame a tranſlator for follow-his author: and it was for that very reaſon, that I ſhou'd not have taken any notice of the *delightful hiſtory of the coat and cloak*, which is given us in one of the longeſt ſpeeches in the fourteenth Odyſſey.

But we have ſeveral inſtances of additional lowneſſes: I obſerv'd particularly that they were pretty frequent, when the ſcene is in Ithaca. Thus:

His taſk it was the wheaten loaves to lay,
(*l*) And from the banquet take the bowls away.

Again;

But if to honour loſt, 'tis ſtill decreed
(*m*) For you my bowl ſhall flow, my flocks ſhall bleed.

Again;

(*n*) Is this, returns the Prince, for mirth a time?
When lawleſs gluttons riot, mirth's a crime, &c.

(*i*) ——— Πολίτης ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν,
Ὅς μοι κήδινος ἱταρων ἦν, κεδνότατός τε. κ'. 225.
(*k*) ——— Γερήνιος ἱππότα Νέστωρ. γ'. 405.
(*l*) B. 14. 507. ξ'. 455.
(*m*) B. 1, 480. α'. 378.
(*n*) B. 2, 347. β'. 310.

The

The meanneſs here (interpos'd Antiphaus) is occaſion'd by a juſt deſign; that of writing in a ſtile agreeable to the ſimplicity of the ſubject: in ſeveral other places, it has a leſs excuſable riſe; I mean, the labour and difficulty of rhyme. The Poet's being in haſte to get this drudgery off his hands, ſometimes draws him into the uſe of expreſſions which are flat and contemptible. Thus, I believe, we may account for the lowneſſes in theſe couplets:

While with my ſingle ſhip, *adventʼrous I*
(o) Go forth, the manners *of yon men to try.*
Mean while the Gods the dome of *Vulcan throng,*
(p) Apollo comes, and Neptune comes *along.*
——When great Alcides roſe,
(q) And Euritus, who *bade the Gods be foes.*

You need only read over one ſingle paſſage, to gueſs how frequently the ſenſe may be leſſen'd and broke by this means; and how often we are put off with low, wretched words, meerly for want of a more generous rhyme.

You remember the ſpeech of Ulyſſes, when ſhip-wreck'd in his voyage from Calypſo's iſland; 'tis transferr'd, you know, by Virgil into his ſtorm; and both are very ſtrong, and animated. This is the paſſage which I beg leave to read to you from the tranſlation before us.

(o) B. 9, 202. ι'. 174.
(p) B. 8, 362. θ'. 322.
(q) B. 8, 256. θ'. 225.
Οἱ ῥα ἀθηναιοισιν ἐρίζεσκον περὶ τόξων.

(r) Happy! thrice happy! who in battle ſlain,
Preſt in Atrides' cauſe the Trojan plain:
Oh! had I dy'd before *that well-fought wall*,
Had ſome diſtinguiſh'd day renown'd my fall;
(Such as was that when ſhow'rs of jav'lins fled
From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead)
All Greece had paid my ſolemn fun'rals *then*,
And ſpread my glory with the ſons of men.
A ſhameful fate now hides my hapleſs head,
Un-wept, un-noted, and for ever dead.

A mighty wave ruſh'd o'er him as he ſpoke,
The raft it cover'd, and the maſt it broke;
Swept from the deck, and from the rudder *torn*,
Far on the ſwelling ſurge the chief was *borne*:
While by the howling tempeſt *rent in twain*,
Flew ſail and ſail-yards ratling o'er the main.
Long preſs'd, he heav'd beneath the weighty wave,
Clogg'd by the cumb'rous veſt Calypſo gave;
At length emerging, from his *noſtrils wide*,
And guſhing mouth, effus'd the briny tide, *&c.*

The meanneſs of this paſſage, in compariſon either of the original Greek, or of Virgil's imitation of it, appears to be in a great meaſure owing to a poverty of rhyme. It has given a low turn to the whole paſſage; and that lowneſs is ſtill moſt evident in the terminating of the lines.

There are a thouſand other things (reſumed Philypſus) which contribute to the meanneſs of ſtile; even a deſire to avoid it, will occaſion it:

(r) Od. 5, 393. *l.* 306.

'tis

'tis not uncommonly ſeen, that the ſtraining to elevate a point, will make it really the more mean and ridiculous: as nothing ſhews the littleneſs of a dwarf more than ſtrutting.

One wou'd be apt to ſuſpect this to be the caſe in the following verſes:

(s) There figs ſky-dy'd a purple hue diſcloſe—
There *dangling pears* exalted ſcents unfold,
And *yellow apples ripen into gold.*

And in theſe other:

(t) Lur'd with the *vapour* of the fragrant feaſt,
In ruſh'd the ſuitors with *voracious haſte.*

Sometimes one ſingle word will leſſen the ſentiment, and break in upon the dignity of verſe. Thus, where the Greek calls Memnon the *glorious ſon of Aurora*, we find it in the tranſlation only (a) *ſwarthy Memnon.* This, by ſinking below the original: as it may be as faulty to ſtick too cloſe to it. (b) *Hog-herd and cow-keeper* (ſays one of the notes) *are not to be uſed in our poetry, tho' there are no finer words, than thoſe which anſwer them, in the Greek language.* For the ſame reaſon I ſhould think that the uſe of the word (c) *Sty*, which occurs ſo often in the tenth book, might be varied;

(s) B. 11, 727. λ'. 588.
(t) B. 1, 190. *a.* 144.
Ἐς δ' ἦλθεν μνησῆρες ἀγήνορες.——
(a) B. 4, 256. Ἠῶς φαεινὸς ἄγλαος υἱός. δ'. 188.
(b) B. 14. Note 1.
(c) B. 10, 277, 331, 459, &c.

and perhaps ſome few other expreſſions of the ſame nature.

In general, what do you think *(d)* of *ſcudding before the gales to Pylos?* of a *(e)* *ſore foul?* and of *(f)* *ſacrificing throngs?* Are not theſe expreſſions too low for verſe? And is it not too low and ruſtick even for proſe, to talk of the *(g)* ſwelling loins of a goddeſs, or of a nymph's *(h)* pacing along the ſand?

Your inſtances, reply'd Antiphaus, ſufficiently ſhew, that (beſide the inconvenience of rhyme) Mr. Pope does ſometimes, without that wrong biaſs, deviate into a meanneſs of expreſſion: they are directly contrary to his uſual ſpirit. There is a caſe (ſays Philypſus) juſt come into my head, which ought not to be forgot; we may ſee by it, on the other hand, how much this gentleman can improve upon expreſſions in the original, beyond the other tranſlators of Homer. That venerable old poet uſes a phraſe which, though I do not believe it to have been mean in his times, does moſt certainly ſound ſo in the preſent: in ſpeaking of a perſon entirely loſt in melancholy, he ſays, that he was continually *(i)* *eating up his own mind.* So great a man as Cicero has endeavoured to give this in *(k)* Latin; but with that uſual unhappineſs, which attended him in his poetry. In another

(*d*) B. 3, 221. γ'. 180.
(*e*) B. 3, 252.
(*f*) B. 3, 17. γ'. 12.
(*g*) B. 5, 296.
(*h*) Ibid. 192.
(*i*) Ὃν θυμὸν κατέδων. Il. ζ'. 202.
(*k*) Ipſe ſuum cor edens. *Tuſc. Queſt.* lib. 3.

part

part of Homer, we have the ſame manner of expreſſion; and it is as meanly tranſlated by ſeveral hands. The paſſage is a part of Jupiter's ſpeech to Juno; in which, to ſet out the violence of her hatred to Priam and his family, the God ſays, that *ſhe would (l) eat them, or ſwallow them up quick.* Actius Labeo, a wretched, though a court writer, tranſlated ſeveral books of the Iliad into Latin; and if we may gueſs at the reſt, by the only verſe left us of that work (which, as it happens, anſwers this very line) we have no great reaſon to lament the loſs of it: this an old Scholiaſt has preſerv'd, for a taſte of the performance:

Crudum manduces Priamum, Priamique piſinnos.

Labeo, as Mr. Pope obſerves in his note upon the *(m)* place, is equall'd by Ogilby:

Both king and people thou wou'dſt eat alive:

As is Ogilby by Hobbes:

And eat up Priam, and his people all.

Such a general meanneſs in giving us this expreſſion of the Greek Poet, muſt make us look upon Mr. Pope with the greater regard, if he can keep it from ſinking in Engliſh: this he has not only done, but gives it to us in an handſome poetical turn:

(l) Ὡμὸν βεβρώθοις Πρίαμον, Πριαμοῖό τε παῖδας. Il. δ'. 35.

(m) Il. B. 4, 56.

Let Priam bleed! if yet thou thirſt for more,
(o) Bleed all his ſons, and Ilion float with gore!

This expreſſes the full ſentiment; and that with an air of greatneſs and majeſty in it: 'tis now language not unfit to be put into the mouth of Jupiter.

Antiphaus was extremely pleaſed to ſee ſo great a change in Philypſus; and that (ſudden as it was) it had not affected him in the uſual manner. As men generally run from one extreme to the other, he was afraid, that the making him ſenſible of the faults of the tranſlator, might give him ſome diſtaſte to his beauties: but as he found he was fallen into the indifferent juſt manner of reading, he thought he might now ſafely go on with him farther in the ſame way. "The defect (ſays he) which you have proved in ſome particulars on the tranſlator, is ſufficiently recompenc'd by his flame and ſpirit, and the general beauty of his diction. 'Tis from this quarter, that I am ſtill the moſt apprehenſive of faults in the work before us. Surely, ſays Philypſus, you have nothing more to produce on that head!" Yes (reply'd Antiphaus) I have a word or two to add to what we obſerved upon it the other night. There are a ſort of verſes, very frequent in our modern writers, which run very ſmoothly off the tongue; the ſtream is eaſy, but there is neither depth nor clearneſs in it: the truth of it is, they are

(o) Il. B. 4, 56.

un-

undiſturbed with meaning; and their calmneſs is as the calmneſs of the night, which is dark withall. If I might have leave, I ſhould call ſuch verſes as theſe, *un-ideal verſes*; and I fear there are ſome few of them to be met with in the Odyſſey.

Pray obſerve what an unthinking harmony there is in this couplet, which comes firſt into my head:

(p) Soft he reclines along the murm'ring ſeas,
Inhaling freſhneſs from the fanning breeze.

And what a panegyrick in this?

——— Every eye
(q) Gaz'd, as before ſome brother of the ſky.

I will read you but a few more:

(r) The royal palace to the queen convey.

And,

(s) ——Plan with all thy arts the ſcene of fate.
(t) Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs
The miniſters of blood in dark ſurpriſe.

But among all of them, upon comparing the original and the tranſlation, this ſeems to be the non-pareil:

(p) B. 6, 284. ξ'. 236.
(q) B. 8, 18. Ἐθηήσαντο ἰδόντες. θ'. 17.
(r) B. 2, 378. β'. 336.
(s) B. 13, 442. ν'. 387.
(t) B. 4, 708.

Then

(u) Then warp my voyage on the ſouthern gales,
O'er the warm Libyan wave to ſpread my ſails.

Mr. Pope has had a critique on ſome lines of his Iliad, which is chiefly taken up in diſcovering, or making falſe Engliſh of them: if this can neither darken the line, nor affect the ſenſe conſiderably, it ſeems to me not to be of any concern in compariſon of the former fineſſes. The ancient criticks were much kinder on this head: and 'tis hence, that we owe many of our figures in Rhetorick, to peccadillo's againſt Grammar. I am the moſt unfit in the world to determine in this caſe, becauſe I have always found myſelf as much averſe to the Grammatical ſort of Criticiſm, as I am fond of the Poetical: but I am apt to think, that there are not many faults of this kind juſtly chargeable on the Odyſſey. Of the few which I have by chance obſerved, the chief are to be met with in the cloſe of his verſes: thus it occurs, if I remember right, twice or thrice in that ſhort paſſage, which I repeated to you the other evening, on the tranſformation of Ulyſſes. This rhyme, Philypſus, is a terrible thing: it has ſpoiled more lines——Good Antiphaus (cry'd Philypſus haſtily) be not ſo inveterate againſt rhyme; does not it ſoften and beautify verſe? and turn poetry into a ſort of muſick to a good ear?—I am not univerſally an enemy to rhyme, you know, return'd Antiphaus: it does very

(u) B. 4, 104. δ'. 85. Καὶ Διβόην.

well

well in Odes and Sonnets to Armida: but for any thing very ſolid or pathetick, ſurely 'tis an ornament too contemptible, as well as too much abus'd. One of the firſt pieces in Latin rhyme I know of, that famous Stanza of Adrian, does well enough; 'twas ſpoke out of pure gaiety, and good humour: but to introduce it gravely into poetry, as it was the effect of a miſerable depraved taſte, ſo will the productions of thoſe ages ſhew how happily it ſucceeded. The Runick lays, anſwered Philypſus, I do not pretend to admire: but ſurely you will allow it to have ſucceeded better in our language, than it did in the hands of that monkiſh clan of poets. 'Tis true (ſays Antiphaus ſmiling) we have not improved it yet into middle rhymes, and ſome other of their excellencies. Perhaps it would have been happy too for our poetry, if we had confined this muſick, as you call it, to its proper ſubjects. How wretchedly does it ſound in ſome of our tragedies? In ſuch, all the actors to me ſeem rather to be *playing at crambo* with one another, than endeavouring in the leaſt to affect the audience. With all the violence that Mr. Dryden wrote in this cauſe, you ſee he was forced to recant at laſt. The only true reaſon of his perſiſting in it at all is, I believe, very obvious, though the laſt he would have given us: it was then the Humour of the age. Mr. Dryden, every one knows, was but too often obliged to write for money; and then his buſineſs was to pleaſe his cuſtomers.

And now I have mentioned Mr. Dryden, it may be worth the inquiry, to conſider a little more

more particularly, what that writer has ſaid on this ſubject; as he muſt be allow'd on all hands to have been one of the niceſt judges of harmony, one of the greateſt maſters of verſification, and one of the beſt poetical criticks in general, that our nation has ever produced.

In reading what he has given us in different places on this head, 'tis eaſy to ſee, that he very much obſerves a difference between *rhyme* in the *genuine* ſenſe of the word, by which he always intends the true harmony of verſe; and *rhyme* in the *loweſt* ſenſe, or that gingle and playing with ſounds, in which the moderns have exceeded all the other ages of the world; and which indeed, ſince the laſt revival of letters, has bid fair for the *univerſal monarchy* in poetry.

Though Dryden underſtood rhyme in the firſt ſenſe, as well as moſt writers, and generally ſtoop'd to the uſe of it in the other: yet I am inclined to believe that he always ſaw through the defects and inconveniences, not to ſay the barbarity and childiſhneſs of it. Indeed one might be juſtified in ſaying even this; for Dryden himſelf follows Voſſius in calling it expreſly, (*x*) *a childiſh ſort of verſe*; and ſays, that ſome *rhyming hexameters*, which may be diſcovered in Homer, were probably the remains of a *barbarous age*. "Virgil (adds that writer) had them "in ſuch abhorrence, that he would rather "make a falſe ſyntax, than what we call a "rhyme.——The nicer ears in Auguſtus's

(*x*) Preface to Virgil's Paſtorals, page 95.

"court

court cou'd not pardon him for a line, in which he had only dropt ſomething like it: ſo that the principal ornament of modern poetry, was accounted *deformity* by the Latins and Greeks."

After obſerving that the Greek tongue falls naturally into *iambicks*, and the Latin into *heroick* verſe, he calls all our little arts of rhyming, *barbarities:* and adds, that "as age brings men back into the ſtate and infirmities of *childhood*, upon the *fall* of their empire, the Romans *doted* into *rhyme*."

What you have now read to me (interpos'd Philypſus) ſhews ſufficiently, that Mr. Dryden could give up an old friend, and abuſe him heartily behind his back: that writer cou'd ſpeak the ſevereſt things of rhyme, when he was got into a vein of proſe-writing: but the preſent ill treatment he gives to it, may perhaps be on ſome particular occaſion; and in ſome caſes, I cannot deny that rhyme may be a very improper ornament.

No (returned Antiphaus) he is here ſpeaking of rhyme in general: if you wou'd know his ſentiments of rhyme, more particularly in relation to the preſent purpoſe, and its uſe in tranſlating an *heroick poem*; as it happens, there is a remarkable paſſage wrote by him on this very occaſion: it was in his more advanced judgment; and particularly, as he himſelf informs us, when he was in his great climacterick. He is ſpeaking of Hannibal Caro's tranſlation of the Æneid: "the performance, (*y*) ſays he,

(*y*) Dedication to his Æneid, page 417.

"is

" is very mean, though that poet took the
" *advantage* of writing in blank-verſe, and
" freed himſelf from the ſhackles of modern
" rhyme. I will not make a digreſſion here, (pro-
" ceeds this writer) tho' I am ſtrangely tempted
" to it: but will only ſay, that he who can write
" *well* in rhyme, may write *better* in blank-verſe.
" Rhyme is certainly a conſtraint even to the *beſt*
" poets, and thoſe who make it with *moſt eaſe*:—
" What it adds to *ſweetneſs*, it takes away from
" *ſenſe*; and he who loſes the *leaſt* by it, may be
" called a *gainer*. It often makes us ſwerve from
" an author's meaning: as if a mark be ſet up
" for an archer at a great diſtance, let him aim
" as exactly as he can, the leaſt wind will take
" his arrow, and divert it from the white."

Thus far Mr. Dryden. And his opinion weighs the more with me in this caſe; becauſe, if any thing, we might expect that he ſhould be prejudic'd in favour of rhyme; but the reaſon of the thing, you ſee, prevailed over all other conſiderations: he goes ſo far as to condemn his own manner of writing, rather than ſuffer ſuch a corruption to paſs without a ſevere cenſure; and to that end, very generouſly gives up his practice to his judgment.

Indeed I know of but one argument (and that the mereſt *circle* in the world) to ſupport the preſent practice of writing in rhyme; we muſt *uſe* it, becauſe 'tis all the *faſhion*. We who were never ſo far infected, can laugh heartily at ſome of the French, for rhyming throughout their comedies; yet rhyme in tragedy was very becoming among us, in an age not the leaſt knowing and polite. Diſuſe has made us

ſee

e the flatneſs and inconvenience of that orna-ent; and nothing reads more inſipid, than e beſt pieces left us in that way. Tell me, hilypſus, why do we ſo much diſlike theſe auties of their kind in our age?

I believe, ſays Philypſus, 'tis as you obſerve. ow the taſte is altered, and the faſhion worn ff; we can look back, and perceive with eaſe e prejudice of that beauty, where the end is ſtir up the ſoul by true repreſentations of ature: to *raiſe (z) terror or compaſſion, is the uſineſs of the tragick poet*; and to endeavour to iſe either with rhyme, and all its harmony, eems to me more proper for an Italian opera, an an Engliſh tragedy.

Very true, ſays Antiphaus; and do you not udge it as abſurd, where any other paſſions are o be mov'd, as well as terror and compaſſion?— Undoubtedly, reply'd Philypſus.——And is it ot the buſineſs of the Epick, to awake the ul? to raiſe in it an eſteem for virtue, and n hatred to vice? In a word, to move the aſſions, particularly thoſe very paſſions you ave mentioned? Why then is rhyme, which ou diſallow in Tragedy, to be thought uſeful nd commendable in the Epick?—As for mov-ng the paſſions (ſays Philypſus) rhyme, I llow you, is of no uſe in either; but it is a ne ornament, which may be more proper in e one than in the other: in Dramatick pieces

(z) La tragedie roulât ſur deux paſſions: ſcavoir la terreur, ui doivent donner les ſuite. funeſtes du vice; & la compaſ-on, qu' inſpire la vertu perſecutée & patiente. *Archiev. de ambray, ſur l'Eloquence, Dial.* 1.

the

the perſons ſhould be ſuppoſed to ſpeak extem-
pore; but there can be no ſuch thing con-
ceived in an Epick poem.—I beg your par-
don, ſays Antiphaus, though not ſo ſtrongly,
yet this is often ſuppos'd in an Epick, as well
as in Tragedy. Do you think that Homer is tel-
ling you a ſtory, or Ulyſſes, when we are got
into Phæacia? In the ſecond Æneid, have you
not ſeveral intermediate ideas, which agree not
with a reader, but a ſpectator?—Yes, Sir, in
all active poems, as well as tragedy, the author
is to diſappear as much as poſſible: the greateſt
art of them is to deceive us into an imagination
that we hear the very perſons ſpeaking, and ſee
them acting before us. *In ipſis omnia ſunt oculis.*
Every poem the nearer it comes to this, the
more perfect it is. Conſider too, how much
of any good Epick piece is purely Dramatick:
'tis ſcarce to be imagined, for inſtance, how
ſmall a number of lines in the Æneid are properly
Virgil's: they almoſt all belong to the perſons en-
gaged in the poem; and where the lines are ſpoke,
we ſee the attitudes and behaviour of the particular
perſons, and receive the words from their mouth.

Much of what you urge is true, anſwered
Philypſus; but yet you muſt allow, that rhyme
ſounds unnatural in tragedy, and agreeable in
pieces of the other kind. That is, as we were
juſt ſaying (reply'd Antiphaus) becauſe in the
'tis at preſent all the mode: let the faſhion al-
ter, and this beauty will look as falſe in one
as it has already in the other. This taſte, which
had been too much eſtabliſhed by the revivers
of poetry in Provence and Tuſcany, led away
the firſt poet of our nation, who attempted
an

ny thing toward an Epick; and probably we ould to this day have thought it the on- proper for our language, had it not hap- ly been diſdained by the great genius of ilton, who choſe rather to follow the true d Roman manner. It was Milton who flung f our fetters; and we may venture to ſay the prophetical manner of a very good wri- r now living, *that (a) he ſhall for ever be ho- ur'd as our deliverer from that bondage.* Vhat a pity it is he did not ſuffer us ſtill to ntinue in it, ſince we are ſo fond of our ains! How happy would it have been to have ven up the nervouſneſs and majeſty of his em, for Prior's eaſe, or the ſweetneſs of Valler? I know not what the world may y to it; but, for my part, when I read in e biſhop of Sarum's hiſtory, *that* Paradiſe Loſt *a noble piece (b) though the author affected write it in blank verſe:* it always puts me mind of the gentleman in the monkiſh ages poetry, who ſaid of Virgil's Æneid, that it *as really a very good poem, and* wanted *nothing t the (c) ſweets of rhyme, to make it the moſt rfect work in its kind.*

Well, (ſays Philypſus) I own there is the reater majeſty in blank-verſe; but you will wn too, that the other is the more beautiful. es, (reply'd Antiphaus) but for that very reaſon blank verſe undoubtedly the more proper for

(a) Mr. *Watts*'s Horæ Lyr. Pref. page 31.
(b) Biſhop's *Burnet*'s Hiſtory of his own Times, page 163.
(c) See the *Spectator*, Vol. I. Numb. 60.

the

the Epick; as that is the moſt majeſtick kind of Poetry imaginable. And even as to the ſound, thoſe muſical returns (if allow'd to be true beauties) are more than balanc'd by the *dead manner* introduc'd with them into Poetry: what I mean is, that perpetual likeneſs in the cadence and turn of the periods: how frequently do they fall in ſeveral repeated couplets, without any variety, or relief to the ear? You will ſometimes meet with a rhyme-poem, all the lines of which run off intirely with the ſame pauſes: the ſtream always equal, and ſo level, that you can ſcarce perceive it to move. What do you think of each couplet, chiming on in the ſame ſtops and meaſure, with the moſt tedious uniformity of ſound imaginable? —— That is the fault of the poet, not of the uſe of rhyme, ſays Philypſus: I cou'd name ſeveral of our poets who drop that uniformity. To go no farther, the poem we were dipping in t'other day, with Mr. Oldiſworth's name to it, has a good deal of variety in its periods. I own it, ſays Antiphaus, in that and ſeveral other pieces. You muſt have heard me commend the tranſlator of *Vida*'s *Poeticks*, for this, among his ſeveral other excellencies. But after all, let our poets manage the cadence and ſtructure in rhyme-verſe never ſo artfully, it will fall vaſtly ſhort of blank in theſe particulars. Indeed rhyme is a natural enemy to them; it breaks and diſturbs both the ſtructure and the cadence. The very ſound of any periods the beſt contriv'd, will convince one of this: when a perſon of a good ear is reading them, you may obſerve, that he endeavours to drop the rhyme, and loſe the gingle of it,

as much as poſſible: and when the ſound of is not ſufficiently kept under, you will find at it ſpoils the continuance, and occaſions too reat a break in the period.

You may ſee by what I have been ſaying, that is charge is not deſign'd againſt *ſingle couplets*; e corruption in this reſpect evidently ceaſes, here there are no periods to be varied. To termine preciſely where it will grow prejudi-al, wou'd be difficult, and is not very mate-al: though I know not but what it might be eaſy to a very nice ear, to have only four es together with regular rhyme: and poſſi-y on this very account, the ſtanza but of o couplets has generally unequal rhymes, he ſecond line anſwering the fourth) and at of three varies in the laſt couplet. Howe-r forced or delicate this obſervation may be ought, one thing I cou'd aſſert with ſome gree of confidence: I dare ſay, any one of a od ear, who reads only ten lines of the beſt yme-verſification, and an equal number of ilton's true harmonious verſes, upon this w, will find a nobler ſound, and that variety hich is neceſſary to the beauty of periods, d to the pleaſure of a reader) much ſtronger, d much fuller in the latter.

What has been ſaid of *Couplets*, may in a at meaſure be ſaid of *Odes*, which conſiſt proper *ſtanzas*: as theſe come next to coup-s for ſhortneſs, they have ſcarce room, ſingly, the tedious uniformity we have been com-ining of: and unleſs the *Ode* be long, they not produce it by their *number*. There y be a variety too of ſingular uſe in this

ſort

ſort of poetry, where a perſon can run theſe *ſtanzas* artfully into one another; if the interweaving of them be not ſo frequent and equal, as to bring in that very ſatiety we would avoid. Thus qualified, rhyme is, at leaſt, very tolerable in *Odes*: and even in *Pindaricks*, the moſt extenſive and lofty of any, the prejudice of it is not preſſing: there is ſo great a liberty (I mean in our common *Pindaricks*) of varying the numbers, and of fixing or deferring the rhyme at pleaſure. But above all in ſingle couplets, rhyme is moſt allowable; and in them indeed, I ſhould think, it deſerves the preference to blank-verſe: it may pleaſe the ear more, and cannot do that miſchief, for which it is chiefly to be avoided in all large pieces, and all compoſitions of a nobler ſort. In this reſpect, it is with poetry, as it is in building; a pile *(d)* compoſed of ſtones, cut juſt alike, all equal and uniform, and diſpoſed alike, without any thing either great or beautiful in the whole, will yield to one of a good deſign, form'd of materials various and unequal, and perhaps ruder, or leſs exactly poliſhed: at the ſame time, the particulars of which it is made taken ſingly, will evidently exceed the others. Thus we find in a walk of trees, that the two oppoſites, when cut to anſwer each other, look better, than if they were in diſagreeing figures; but a wood or a garden full of trees, all in one figure, would be rather diſpleaſing to the eye than otherwiſe: in the two ſimilar figures, we ſhould have a pleaſing *uniformity*; but in this

(*d*) See Dr. *Trapp*'s Preface to his *Æneid*, p. 45.

large

large repeated view of the ſame thing, we ſhou'd loſe that *variety*, which a late very ingenious writer has ſhewn to be inſeparable from the idea of beauty; and which the mind ſeems to require the more, as the number of objects is increaſed.

It is a known rule in verſification, that the ſecond rhyme ought not to reſemble the ſound of thoſe in a preceding couplet. When it is carried to the fartheſt, it will not bear beyond the third line; and even that is run generally into an Alexandrine, that in ſome degree the turn of the period and the numbers may be varied. Now why ſhould it not be as diſagreeable to have a perpetual uniformity of periods, as a continued likeneſs of rhyme? The latter no man in the world will allow to be proper; nay, it cou'd not be borne with, only for three couplets together.

But, ſuppoſing rhyme a real beauty in poems of an higher kind, which I am perſuaded it is not; (to ſpeak nothing of its uniform returns, and the havock which it makes in the periods, nor even of the *diverſion* it gives the thoughts of the *reader*, and its general diſſervice to pieces that ſhould be ſolid and pathetick: to omit all this) the ſingle reaſon which introduc'd this queſtion is, as I take it, ſufficient to determine it. If rhyme is exceedingly apt to miſlead a writer, often to cramp, and ſometimes to ſpoil his ſentiments; its benefits, as being only benefits of ſound, will be far from balancing thoſe inconveniencies of ſo much ſuperior a nature. This at leaſt is the caſe with rhyme: it gives either an impertinent pleaſure, or an unneceſſary trouble to a writer; and at

the ſame time that it diſtracts his attention, it increaſes his difficulties: in a word, 'tis a falſe bent put upon the thoughts of the poet; and, in the beſt, proves frequently a counter-biaſs too ſtrong for their good ſenſe.

I own, it is with a ſtrange readineſs, that people fall generally into this taſte; it has almoſt *univerſal conſent* on its ſide: and the few aſſertors of the liberty of verſe meet with little praiſe, or even countenance, from the world. How many perſons would fly into unreaſonable heats upon hearing half that I have ſaid to you? I ſhould beg the favour of any ſuch perſon, who would pleaſe to be diſobliged in it, to aſk himſelf what argument there is for this practice, which has ſo generally obtained in the modern world? If he can find none, 'tis eaſy to bring the matter more home, and to aſk farther, whether he thinks rhyme would be proper in the Odyſſey and Æneid? and then I ſhould be glad to hear what reaſons can be aſſigned, why it ſhould be improper in a Latin or Greek, and not ſo in an Engliſh epick?—Yes, Philypſus, I am perſuaded it is nothing but uſe, which makes it ſupportable at preſent; and whenever the world recovers itſelf from this *agreeable ſtupor*, it will then appear as ridiculous to the reader, as it has been inconvenient to the poet. This I really imagine, that in future, and perhaps far diſtant ages, the criticks, when they look back on any of the beſt poems of this ſort, (which may be deliver'd down to them from their anceſtors) will be at a loſs to give any account of their manner of writing. When they read Mr. Pope's Iliad

Iliad or Odyſſey, they will often applaud the greatneſs of his thoughts, and often admire the happineſs of his diction, as far as the preſent language ſhall be preſerved to them. They will honour his remains; and when they look towards his aſhes with veneration, "there "(will they ſay) lies the great man, who in "ancient days is ſaid to have ſhewn the no-"bleſt genius for poetry in the world: what "beauties do we diſcover in him, through all "this ruſt of time, and ſo much obſolete lan-"guage? He is every way to be commended "as far as any of our ancient poets are; only "he fell into the common fault of thoſe ages, "and always ſhews that trifling labour of mak-"ing the laſt ſyllable of every alternate line, "ſound like the cloſe of the foregoing: bat-"ing this inſignificant taſte of thoſe times, "how much is he to be praiſed, and how "much to be admired?"

Might it not have been much better, and much more for their honour, for Mr. Dryden in his time, or Mr. Pope in ours, to have broke thorough this tedious ſlavery; and to have freed the world from a taſte ſo irrational and barbarous?———I own it to you, I have ſomething of an impatience in me to ſee this great reformation in poetry ſet on foot: I wiſh it cou'd be brought about in our time; and if not, almoſt envy thoſe, who in future ages ſhall be ſo happy, as to ſee men awake from this lethargy of verſe: when all the poets ſhall conſpire to reſtore ſtrength to their ſentiments, and nerves and variety to their numbers: when the writers ſhall

throw aſide all thoſe idle arts and tricks, which we now play with ſounds; and *true harmony* ſhall flouriſh without incroaching upon *true ſenſe*.

(e) O might I live to hail the glorious day,
And ſing loud Pæans thro' the crowded way,
When in triumphant ſtate the Britiſh muſe,
True to herſelf, ſhall *barb'rous* aid refuſe;
And in the Roman majeſty appear,
Which none know better, and none come ſo near!

Philypſus began to be moved by what his friend had urged on this head: I confeſs (ſays he) you are a powerful adverſary to rhyme; but you muſt allow one ſome time to get a thorough diſlike of a thing, which has once been ſo agreeable. There are ſome allowances too to be made in the preſent caſe; I believe, no man is leſs embarraſs'd by the uſe of rhyme than Mr. Pope; and his command in writing will take off much of your objection at preſent: though I own your reaſoning againſt this faſhion in general, to be very ſtrong and forcible. However, this writer has a peculiar happineſs in it, and his language flows with the greateſt eaſe in the world. The whole work ſeems to be uniform in this reſpect: and I believe you can ſcarce inſtance a verſe in it, which does not run off ſmooth and handſomely. 'Tis true, (ſays Antiphaus) there are very few in it

(e) Concluſion of the Earl of Roſcommon's Eſſay on tranſlated verſe.

that

that are harſh, or any ways faulty, either in ſound or compoſition: two or three which I remember of that kind, are ſcarce worth repeating.—Yes, (interrupted Philypſus) if you have obſerved any ſuch, let us have them. What do think of this? ſays Antiphaus:

(f) And to the deaf woods wailing breathes her woes.

Or of theſe:

(g) Rich tapeſtry, ſtiff with inwoven gold.

(h) By what ſtrange fraud Egyſthus wrought, relate,
(By force he cou'd not) ſuch an hero's fate.

No bird of air, no dove of ſwifteſt wing
Shuns the dire rocks: in vain ſhe cuts the ſkies,
(i) The dire rocks meet, and cruſh her as ſhe flies.

(k) I climb a cliff——
To learn if aught of *mortal* works appear,
Or chearful voice of *mortal* ſtrike the ear.

(l) Deem not unjuſtly by my *doom* oppreſt, &c.

Theſe lines are ſomewhat faulty in the ſound, or poſition of the words; but I only mention them; it wou'd be frivolous to make particular remarks on them: you may ſee, Philypſus, that my ſtock is quite out when I ſink ſo low:

(f) B. 6, 138.
(g) B. 4. 406.
(h) B. 3, 311.
(i) B. 12, 78.
(k) B. 10, 172.
(l) B. 1, 86.

my taſk this evening was difficult enough to me; and indeed 'tis not eaſy for any one to find many faults in a piece which comes from ſuch excellent hands. Have you nothing farther to obſerve on it? (ſays Philypſus) I think I have heard you ſpeak formerly of ſome contradictions. —That particular I had forgot, ſays Antiphaus; there are indeed ſome *ſeeming contrarieties* in this work; theſe are of two ſorts; one, in which the tranſlator is *contrary* to his original: and the other, when the tranſlation ſeems to have ſome little circumſtances in it contradictory to one another.

Since you mention the thing, I believe I can recollect a paſſage or two, in which the ſenſe is preſſed ſo far, or ſo much altered from what it was, that they ſeem directly oppoſite to the original. When the Grecian commanders were drawn into Troy, in the famous wooden horſe, the enemy, upon ſuſpicion of the deſign, us'd an artifice to make them *cry out* by ſurprize, if there were really any perſons conceal'd in it. Homer tells us, that all of them *ſat very ſilent*: only Anticlus, one of the officers, was juſt ready to anſwer; when Ulyſſes, who ſat by him, *ſtopt his mouth by force*, prevented his making any noiſe, and ſo preſerved all their lives. Inſtead of which the tranſlation ſays, that this *Anticlus*,

(*m*)——Unable to controul,
Spoke loud the languiſh of his yearning ſoul.

(*m*) B. 4. 388. *&c.* 287.

In another place, where, in Homer, we hear of an hero falling in the defence of his country, *under the walls of his native city*; the tranſlator, in drawing out the circumſtances of it, ſpeaks as if it was (*m*) *on a foreign ſhore*. In the ſecond book, we meet with three or four particulars of this kind.———There Telemachus deſires the ſuitors (as it is in Homer) to leave him, and be quiet; as in Mr. Pope, to (*n*) *riſe in his aid*.——There the ſame prince is ſaid to *draw his hand* gently *out of that of Antinous*; inſtead of which the tranſlation, I think, tells us that he *frown'd*; caught away his hand (*p*) *ſternly*; and *ſtrode away* in a paſſion. 'Tis the ſame caſe with Mentor in the council: he roſe to make a ſpeech to them, with (as the Greek ſignifies) a *wiſe* or *friendly* air; but in the Engliſh,

(*q*) *Stern* as he roſe, he caſt his eyes around,
That *flaſh'd with rage*; and as he ſpoke, he *frown'd*.

Theſe look like contrarieties between Homer and his tranſlator; there ſeem to be a few others, between paſſages in the tranſlation itſelf.

There is a part of Mercury's ſpeech in the fifth Odyſſey, and another point in the deſcrip-

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(*n*) B. 8, 580. θ'. 524. ——ἑῆς πρόσθεν πόλιος——
(*o*) B. 2, 77. β'. 20.
Σχέσθε φίλοι, καί μ' οἶον ἐάσατε πένθεϊ λυγρῷ
Τείρεσθαι———
(*p*) B. 2, 362. β'. 321.
——ἐκ χειρὸς χεῖρα σπάσεν Ἀντινόοιο
Ῥεῖα,----
(*q*) B. 2, 259. β'. 228.

tion of Lachæa, an uninhabited iſland, which (I remember) I mentioned to you formerly, as examples of this inconſiſtency. Such indeed they appeared to me, even after a third reading: but upon conſulting the original, I at laſt found them to be capable of a conſiſtent meaning. However it is to be wiſhed, that the tranſlator had ſet them in a clearer light: for in one, the reader will be apt to imagine, that the poet ſpeaks of (*r*) *inhabitants in a deſart country*; and in the other, that Mercury is ſaid to have been (*s*) *vaſtly delighted* with the ſight of Calypſo's iſland, and *not to have been delighted at all* with the ſight of it.

In another place (I take it to be in the very firſt book of the Odyſſey) Telemachus ſays, that his Father is (*t*) *dead*, and that he is wandering from country to country, at the ſame article of time: thus too we hear the ſea call'd (*u*) *the foaming flood* in one line; and in the very next, 'tis the *level ſurface of the deep*.

As for *mere miſtakes*, (where a verſe carries ſomething of *blunder* in the ſound of it) I have taken but little notice of them; and ſhall only mention two or three, juſt to ſhew, that the *greateſt writers* are capable of falling into ſuch errors, as will be diſcernible to the *meaneſt readers*.

(*x*) *I anſwer'd*, Goddeſs! human *is thy breaſt*—

(*r*) Book 9. compare verſe 143 with 147.
(*s*) Book 5, compare verſe 98 with 124.
(*t*) B. 1, 299 and 309.
(*u*) B. 5, 65.
(*x*) B. 10, 451.

—is

——is a line of this kind: and the expreſſions in it will appear to every one that looks upon it, to be improperly put together, on the ſame account as thoſe in the following couplet:

(y) Some other motive, *goddeſs!* ſways thy mind,
Some cloſe deſign, or turn of *woman-kind.*

There is a verſe juſt come into my head, in which the tranſlator may be thought to talk of (z) *ſeeing a ſound*; and in another we are told of *a place ſo* (a) *deep, that you cou'd not ſhoot to the bottom of it.*

I know not whether a ſevere critick would not think that there is a jar between the expreſſions, where Ulyſſes is ſaid to be

——Doom'd to mourn,
(b) Bitter *Conſtraint, erroneous* and forlorn.

And where *Halitherſes* ſpeaks of

(c) *Deeds then undone.*

But theſe, and ſuch like trifles, I ſhall leave to thoſe, who are fond of finding faults; and whom I can own without envy to have a greater niceneſs and curioſity, in verbal criticiſm, than ever I deſire to have.

(y) B. 5, 224.
(z) B. 6, 40.
ſe, from their thrones thy kindred monarchs *ſigh.*
(a) Nor the fleet arrow from the twanging bow,
ent with full force, cou'd reach the depth below.
B. 12, 102.

(b) B. 1, 102.
(c) B. 2, 201.

Theſe, though leſs conſiderable blemiſhes in a *poetical* character, are much more obvious to every eye, than the greater defects of a poem; and are generally obſerved upon with more ſcorn and contempt, than any other: they border on *ridicule*; and that is a thing, which will ever be agreeable to *little* minds. That verſe in the *Britiſh Princes*, which deſcribes (*d*) the *veſt of a naked Pict*; and that in one of Mr. Dryden's tragedies, which ſpeaks of (*e*) *Silence invading the ear*, has probably been repeated many times more, than the beſt line even Dryden ever wrote. This is low enough o' conſcience, though it has been a very faſhionable way of critiſing of late Years: it ſhews how ill-natur'd the world is; but people will have their laugh: and 'tis vaſtly eaſier to *ridicule* than to *admire*.

It is this ſort of men, Philypſus, and a clan of others, equally malicious, and more gloomy than the former, who have brought the name of *Critick* into ſuch contempt among us: while thoſe have imagined, that ſneering and malice are the beſt titles to wit; and theſe were of opinion, that *to find fault* is to criticiſe. How different from this was the method of the ancient criticks of Greece and Rome? Indeed criticiſm, as firſt inſtituted by Ariſtotle, was deſign'd for a ſtandard of judging well; to give an inſight into the excellencies of authors, and to diſcern their faults. There was a time, when

(*d*) A painted veſt Prince Voltager had on,
Which from a naked Pict his grandſire won.

(*e*) What horrid ſilence does invade my ear?

it was a ſtudy highly rational; far from borrowing its force from ridicule and falſe wit, it ſhould proceed upon known rules and eſtabliſhed meaſures. I do not ſay but that the beſt criticks may have approved of particular lines, without being capable of aſſigning the reaſons why they pleaſed them ſo greatly. You often ſee a face which is very taking, without any regularity of features: ſuch an one as pleaſes every body, though no body can give the reaſon of his being pleaſed with it. Eloquence has its *Je ne ſçai quoi's*, as well as beauty. Hower moſt commonly we can ſpecify the particular *features*, which are ſo agreeable; or know that our pleaſure is founded on the ſymmetry of the whole.

But it is not enough that criticiſm is rational; it ſhould ever be humane and good-natur'd. Where the deſign is great, the diſpoſitions juſt, the deſcriptions lively, and the language generally good and poetical, that work is in general to be commended; though the poet, in particular points, may have fallen into many faults; nay, into ſome which look very groſs, when they are conſider'd ſingly. The greateſt critick among the Roman poets lays it down for a rule, that *where there are more beauties than faults in a poem, that piece is to be pronounced good.*: And one of the greateſt criticks among the Greeks, carries it yet farther: he ſhews at large, (*f*) that there is often a *negligence*, that is becoming;——That a greatneſs of ſoul will carry a man above the obſervation of little circumſtan-

(*f*) Longinus, περὶ ὕψους, λγ', &c.

ces;——And that a poet of a generous ſpirit with faults, is greatly preferable to a low, wary writer without them.

Agreeable to this was the behaviour of theſe great men, in laying down rules, or making obſervations: their intention was to diſtinguiſh the beauties of language or ſentiments, from the defects and vices of either. You find them to have been in love with the charms of eloquence, and the true ſpirit of poetry, where ever they meet with them. They take not that ſnarling ſatisfaction in finding faults, which many of their pretended ſucceſſors are ſo full of in their writings. Indeed they very freely pointed out the miſtakes and vices of the greateſt writers; but their chief deſign in this was, that ſuch of their remarks might ſerve as *buoys* to ſhew where former venturers had miſcarried, and to prevent others from running upon the ſame ſhallows. This was the ſpirit of the ancient criticks. Their fate was according to their merit: they ſtill remain among us, and are read with pleaſure and applauſe: whilſt Zoilus, the only *modern critick of the ancients*, has left nothing behind him, except the odious memory of his impotence, and his malice.

Our modern Zoilus's (interpoſed Philypſus) are very eaſily known. They run down the performances of the beſt writers with heat and noiſe: every thing is a fault with them. They will go regularly thorough a poem, with a conſtant frown upon them; and think themſelves obliged to find miſtakes or nonſenſe in every line of it: they condemn by tale, and cenſure by the ſheet. Nothing is more probable,

ble, than that from the *Poem*, they come to quarrel with the *Perſon* of the author. Blemiſhes in his moral character, and even natural imperfections, have a ſhare in their obſervations: and in a word, they labour hard to convince you, that they are bad chriſtians as well as bad criticks. The beſt of it is, their attacks are as weak, as they are violent; they have but little of courage, though they make ſo great a noiſe with it: and are like a ſort of curs that bark moſt, and run the ſooneſt. The character that has been ſo often given of the French as *warriors*, is true of theſe people as *writers*: they behave themſelves fiercer than men in the onſet; and in the ſhock are feebler than women.

I think you cannot be too ſevere upon them, reſum'd Antiphaus: they are a contradiction to true criticiſm; as they always ſhew the greateſt malice againſt every thing, that deſerves the moſt to be commended. Mr. Pope has had the fate to be attack'd by theſe animals: and indeed I do not ſee how he could avoid it. He has too many excellencies to let them ſleep in quiet.

'Tis certain that the faults of a writer (and never was any writer without faults) ought to be obſerv'd; and the more excellent an author is, the more neceſſary is ſuch a work. But this is the drudgery of criticiſm: the pleaſure and the profit are on the other ſide.

We ought to ſhew faults, but we ought never to ſhew malice. And beſide the general good nature which is owing to thoſe great men, who have eminently obliged the world by their labours,

labours, there are particular allowances to be made in this laſt work of the greateſt poet of our age. Nothing in the world is more laborious, than tranſlation; and eſpecially when the piece is engaged for, and muſt go on. 'Tis extremely difficult to keep up the ſpirit of poetry in another's compoſitions, though you catch all the *(g) apteſt moments*; and never employ the mind, but when there is an *impetus* comes upon it toward that particular buſineſs: and this difficulty is greatly increas'd, where a man cannot well ſit down to it, only at ſuch times as his muſe is in a good humour; but may be obliged, in a manner, to write by the hour, and upon fixt returns. I know not how far this was the caſe with Mr. Pope, in this performance: but where-ever it was, the poet will be little more than a common man: he is at ſuch times, much the ſame as a prophet without his *afflatus*.

Beſides this, I muſt repeat, what I have ſaid ſo often: the conſtant returns of rhyme unavoidably unnerve a poem: the age is in love with this weakneſs; and Mr. Pope, in indulging their humour, has perhaps taken much from the ſtrength of his genius: had he been leſs obliging to the taſte of his readers, his performance might have been more ſinewy, and more complete. This ought certainly to be taken into the account; and where ever the tranſlation falls ſhort of the force and nervouſneſs of Homer, we ought conſtantly to aſk ourſelves

(g) Mollia tempora fandi.

this

this queſtion; whether Homer himſelf could have carried it farther, had he wrote (as Mr. Pope does) in Engliſh, and in *rhyme?*

'Tis true, all this may be ſaid of his tranſlation of the Iliad; but if that piece exceed this of the Odyſſey, it is very natural upon many accounts that it ſhould do ſo. Homer exceeds himſelf in that poem.——Great actions ſtrike the ſoul with rapidity; while all the things that relate to lower life, are leſs vigorous and affecting:—The deſcription of warriors and moral precepts have a very different effect on the writers themſelves; thoſe aſſiſt the poetical flame, while theſe fling the mind into a more ſedentary poſture.——'Tis natural almoſt for people to ſleep at ſermons: but a battle rouzes and animates the ſpectators, as well as thoſe who are engaged in it. Thus there muſt be leſs ſpirit in the writer, as well as leſs attentiveneſs in the reader of the Odyſſey: and a tranſlation of it, even from one and the ſame hand, could not fairly be expected to equal a tranſlation of the Iliad. The reader and the poet have both of them the diſadvantage of a cooler and more unactive ſubject: a *poet* (as age always is) vaſtly talkative, a *fable* laid infinitely lower, and a diction almoſt perpetual in moral ſentences and reflections, give a pattern very different from Homer in all his vigour, deſcribing the fatal effects of the paſſion of Achilles, and ſounding out the wars of the Greeks with an air the moſt martial and animated that can be imagined.

Here Antiphaus roſe up from his ſeat: and as Philypſus perceived that he had finiſhed;

"I was unwilling to interrupt you, (ſays he) otherwiſe I ſhould have obſerved on a verſe or two, which you repeated as rough, and of a bad turn. What were thoſe lines of the rocks which you mentioned juſt now?"——Of the rocks? (ſays Antiphaus) let me ſee—Oh, I remember them;

No bird of air, no dove of ſwifteſt wing,
Shuns the dire rocks: in vain ſhe cuts the ſkies,
The dire rocks meet, and cruſh her as ſhe flies.

The ſame, ſays Philypſus: theſe and that other verſe,

Rich tapeſtry, ſtiff with inwoven gold,

ſound indeed rough; but to me their roughneſs is their beauty: the turn of them ſeems deſigned; and their manner, to be expreſſive of their ſenſe—If that be the caſe, I beg pardon, ſays Antiphaus: Were I the greateſt enemy in the world to mere harmony, and the ſtated returns and gingle of ſyllables; I ſhould be one of the firſt among the admirers of ſound, whenever it is made ſerviceable to nature and true ſenſe. That is the art (ſays Philypſus) and the maſtery for which I particularly admire Mr. Pope: It is he who took up that great Rule of *the ſound's being a comment on the ſenſe*, and enforced it beyond any of the criticks, who went before him. To this writer we chiefly owe the revival of the noble art of numbers; and the method of ſignifying motions, and actions, and all that vaſt variety of our paſſions, by *ſounds*. In his incomparable *Eſſay on Criticiſm*, this writer

writer has given us the beſt advices, and interwoven the moſt beautiful examples into them, in a manner that will always be admired. The firſt ſtanza, in his *Ode* on St. Cæcilia's day, is the fulleſt piece of this kind perhaps extant in any language: 'tis itſelf a perfect concert. In the tranſlations of Homer, we find him very frequent, and very juſt, in the ſame manner of expreſſing things: I call it ſo; and cou'd almoſt be perſuaded to think it a better way of expreſſing, than in the common way of *words*. Theſe have a ſenſe affixt to them by cuſtom: while the other ſpeaks by the ideas of things. That is a flowing, variable help: this is the voice of nature, and a ſort of *univerſal* poetical *language*.

Mr. Pope affords us infinite examples of this beauty in his tranſlation of the Odyſſey; it would be endleſs to repeat them all, or to admire them as they deſerve. But amidſt all this variety, there is a ſingle point, which I have obſerved more than any of the reſt: Whenver the poet is ſpeaking of the watry element, or any thing belonging to it, his management of ſounds is particularly frequent and beautiful.

Though it might not be much obſerved at the firſt view, I know no place where a greater variety of things are expreſſed this way, than in the twelfth Odyſſey: 'tis where Ulyſſes is giving an account of his ſetting ſail from the iſland of Circe:

(*i*)——

(i) ———We ruſh'd into the main;
Then bending to the ſtroke, their oars they drew
To their broad breaſts, and ſwift the galley flew.
Up ſprung a briſker breeze: with freſh'ning gales
The friendly goddeſs ſtretch'd the ſwelling ſails;
We drop our oars: with eaſe the pilot guides;
The veſſel light along the level glides.
Then riſing ſad and ſlow, with penſive look,
Thus to the melancholy train I ſpoke.

The objects ſhift perpetually in theſe lines; and yet there is not a ſingle period or pauſe in them, the ſound and turn of which does not agree perfectly with the ſentiment: I do not intend to enlarge much upon them; but had it been wrote in the days of Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus, 'tis poſſible he might have given us a whole diſſertation, on a paſſage which ſo variouſly expreſſes that art, of which he was particularly fond.—That is the critick, I think, ſays Antiphaus, who firſt (k) obſerved this beauty in the noted deſcription of Syſiphus his ſtone. Yes, anſwered Philypſus; and every one knows how perfectly well the excellence of that paſſage is preſerv'd (l) in the tranſlation.

Words give us the bare ideas of things; but words, thus managed, impreſs thoſe ideas very ſtrongly and ſenſibly upon the mind. Do you not perceive the ſtorm riſing, (m) *when the wild*

(i) B. 12, 189.
(k) Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομ. p. 29. Ed. R. Steph.
(l) B. 11, 735, λ'. 593.
(m) B. 12, 379.

winds

winds whiſtle o'er the main? and are you not in the midſt of it when *(n) eaſt, weſt, together roar, and ſouth and north roll mountains to the ſhore?* Then are we hurried o'er the deep, and ſee all the rocks and dangers of it:

(o) Dire Scylla there a ſcene of horror forms,
And here Charybdis fills the ſea with ſtorms;
When the tide ruſhes from her rumbling caves,
The rough rock roars, tumultuous boil the waves;
They toſs, they foam.—

The next moment, if the poet pleaſes (like the Dæmon he ſpeaks of) he can make all as gentle and ſerene, as it was before rough and boiſterous.

(p) Sunk are at once the winds: the air above,
And waves below, at once forget to move:
Some Dæmon calm'd the air, and ſmooth'd the deep,
Huſh'd the loud winds, and charm'd the waves to [ſleep.

Did you ever ſee a more perfect calm? Yet, ſmooth and huſh'd as theſe lines are, you may eaſily perceive a difference between the deſcription of a ſtill ſea, and the eaſy, beautiful current of a river.

(q) Smooth flows the gentle ſtream with wanton pride,
And in ſoft mazes rolls a ſilver tide.

(n) B. 5, 380.
(o) B. 12, 280.
(p) B. 12, 202.
(q) B. 11, 286.

How happy is the hand of the poet, and what a command has he of nature, to make the numbers of his verſe ſpeak his ſentiments! Thus to paint even ſounds; and to draw by meaſures what does not come under the power of the pencil! In this writer, Sir John Denham's wiſh is effected: his lines always flow as his ſubject;

Tho' deep, yet clear; tho' gentle, yet not dull;
Strong, without rage; without o'erflowing, full.

I thank you (ſays Antiphaus bowing) I thank you, my dear Philypſus, for this unexpected view of one of the greateſt beauties in poetry. I could willingly ſtay to hear you farther on this head, and am perfectly angry with the night for wearing away ſo faſt. I hope we ſhall ſoon find an opportunity of reſuming the ſubject (anſwered Philypſus.) I need not tell you how agreeable it is to me, even to be convinced of my errors by Antiphaus; and I'm ſatisfy'd that you take a delight in any occaſion of admiring Mr. Pope. I beg you would tell me, Antiphaus; do you not approve of him in ſome points, more than you have formerly? I do not know how it is, (ſays Antiphaus) but I ſeem to be both more pleas'd, and more diſpleaſed with him, than I was before this inquiry: his excellencies, from the light in which you have ſet them, ſtrike me more agreeably than ever; but then this looking ſo cloſely into his defects, has made thoſe too the more groſs and viſible. However (concluded Philypſus)

lypſus) you will ſtill acknowledge with me, *That his faults are the faults of a man, but his beauties are the beauties of an angel.*—You don't ſeem to like the word: it may ſound perhaps too high; but I mean only of a *great and uncommon genius.*

AN

AN

ESSAY

ON

Mr. *Pope*'s ODYSSEY.

EVENING IV.

AFTER having engaged themſelves ſo far, we may imagine, that Antiphaus and Philypſus waited with a good deal of impatience for the remaining part of the Odyſſey. As t happened, they were both in town before it ppeared in publick; and Philypſus, who was the warmer of the two, uſed to enquire almoſt very day at Lintot's, how the preſs went on? e grew ſtill the more eager, as the time drew earer: and the firſt moment he could procure in *ſheets*, he ſat down to them with all the pleaſure

pleaſure, and all the ſeverity that Antiphaus had preach'd up to him in their former inquiries.

In the time that was taken up by this agreeable ſearch, he call'd often upon that friend, with whom he ſhar'd his ſtudies, as well as his affections. This was rather a dividing than leaving his purſuits: for he ſcarce ever ſaw Antiphaus, without mentioning ſomething of the Odyſſey, and hearing his ſentiments in return. When he had gone intirely thorough the poem, he went immediately to deſire a meeting in ſome place where they might talk more at large upon that head. By good luck Antiphaus was perfectly diſengag'd: "'Tis a fine evening, "ſays he; and if you pleaſe, we will take a "turn together in the gardens of Horatio: "ſince we cannot enjoy his company, at "leaſt let us make uſe of that liberty he has "left with us. There we ſhall be retir'd "from the noiſe and buſtle of the town, and "ſafe from every ſort of interruption." Philypſus was extremely pleas'd to find him ſo ready: they ſtept together into his coach, which drove immediately to Horatio's, and ſet them down at the gates which lead into the great walk of the garden.

After a turn or two there, they ſat down by the ſide of a fountain, full in ſight of the Thames, which paſſes at the bottom of the walk. The walk itſelf makes a fine viſta in its deſcent to the river: at a diſtance, you ſee the fields and hills; at firſt in an eaſy aſcent varied into paſture and arable, and then riſing unequally, and cover'd here and there with woods, till

till they are inſenſibly loſt in a bluiſh caſt of the clouds. The agreeableneſs of the place made Philypſus forget himſelf for a few moments: he was taken up wholly in wandering with his eye, ſometimes over thoſe beautiful gardens, and ſometimes over the irregular proſpect that lay before him. At laſt recollecting himſelf, and turning to Antiphaus, "There is "a difference (ſays he) in the agreeable ſenſe "I feel at preſent from the delightful views on "all ſides of us, which may partly confirm what "we were talking of juſt before we ſat down." Does not this work of Art, with all its ſymmetry and juſtneſs of proportions, ſtrike the mind in a feebler manner, than that landskape of Nature in its infinite irregularity? Theſe meaſured riſes and falls, in ſlopes anſwering each other, thoſe groves terminating every way in an exactneſs of figure, theſe walks interroſſing without confuſion, and uniting ſo happily, cannot fail of pleaſing the eye very much: yet that wildneſs and variety abroad, the river, lawn, fields, and woods, ſo beautifully interſpers'd, compoſe a ſcene much finer and more engaging. For my part, I ſhou'd be apt to prefer that ſingle grot yonder, and the hanging precipice over it, to a whole ſcenary of natural objects laid out in any regular manner whatever. There is ſomething of this in the pleaſure which is given us by the greateſt writers. A noble, natural genius, however irregular and unconfin'd, delights us in a much higher degree, than the moſt uniform and correct: and the writer who enjoys this freedom of ſoul, amidſt all his ſtarts and errors, is greatly to be preferr'd to the juſtneſs of one, who is

too ſevere to commit a fault, and too cool and phlegmatick to be a poet.

Such a temper (reply'd Antiphaus) can never produce any thing truly great. The nobleſt poet in the world has not the feweſt faults: and the ſame ſpirit which qualified Homer to be ſo, is what at the ſame time might hurry him away from a nicer obſervation of ſome little particulars. The very Negligences of Homer ſhew the greatneſs of his ſpirit: and where there may be any like Negligences in the Verſion of Homer, methinks, it would be but juſtice to attribute them to the ſame cauſe: at leaſt where the ſpirit of that poet is ſo diſcernible, as it is in this late tranſlation.

I cannot but ſmile ſometimes, when I hear a ſeverer reader very gravely condemning a poem for a few faults, which may be evident in it here and there. Nothing can be plainer than that our judgments ought to be form'd upon the whole, and not upon particulars: the ſuperiority of beauties or defects is the only thing that can determine the character of the piece. 'Tis poſſible that Mr. Hobbes may have expreſs'd a word or two correctly, where the new tranſlation has deviated into a metaphorical or licentious expreſſion: but what a ſtrange method of compariſon wou'd it be, to ſettle our opinion of the writers from hence? By ſuch a way of proceeding, we might prefer one, who loſes the life and vigor of poetry throughout, to others who preſerve it ſo ſtrongly in the general turn of their compoſitions.

As we go on, Philypſus, with our uſual freedom of ſpeaking our ſentiments on each particular

cular paſſage; I dare ſay, that even all thoſe, which may ſeem faulty to us, will make but a ſmall figure, when compar'd to the ſeveral excellencies of this piece. As for my part, after a reſearch of ſome care thro' the whole tranſlation, I find no reaſon at all to alter my opinion, "That the beauties of it are far more numerous, and far more conſiderable, than its "blemiſhes: even taking all thoſe things for "*real* blemiſhes, which we may only *imagine* "to be ſuch."

If the faſhionable choice of *verſe* be juſtly blameable, it may as juſtly be ſaid, that no one moves with more freedom in his fetters. In particular lines, there may be ſome farther diſagreeable *Likeneſſes* of Sound; but the *Variety* of Numbers in general is great and handſome: what ſmoothneſs and harmony do we find thro' the courſe of the poem; and how ſeldom are they interrupted either by the *littleneſs*, or the *vaſtneſs* of the words; by the *openneſs* of the vowels, the *claſhing* of conſonants, or any other roughneſſes whatever! Not to mention againſt theſe, that *ſignificance* of ſound, which is more frequently and more happily practis'd by Mr. Pope, than by any other of the modern poets.

As to the *diction*; not only the poem, but our language itſelf is enrich'd by it. Where it is once mean, it is in many inſtances great, noble, and ſolemn. Where a ſimplicity beyond our taſte is to be preſerv'd, we may expect ſome flatneſſes: and, it may be, to theſe perhaps we owe that juſtneſs and purity, which in ſo many places makes us imagine, that we

are converſing with perſons of thoſe firſt ages of the world, in all their plainneſs and honeſty of behaviour. At other times the narration is rais'd, and the images ſtrengthen'd, by a figurative way of ſpeaking, tho', no doubt, in ſome caſes, to exceſs: but theſe exceſſes may well be paſſed over, when we conſider, that they proceed from liberties which are highly uſeful in rendering the ſtyle the more various and poetical; ſo far, as frequently to improve upon Homer himſelf.

Above all, is that *flame* and *ſpirit* diffus'd thro' the whole poem; and often-times ſo well kept up, as to make us forget that we reading a tranſlation. When we are engaged in the piece, do not the *great* and *generous* ſentiments we meet with perpetually, make a few thoughts, which have ſomething *cold* or *little* in them, appear inconſiderable upon the firſt compariſon? What *openings* have we, and how little *obſcurity!* What a number of natural thoughts, images, and deſcriptions might be produc'd, to over-balance ſuch lines in it, as may ſeem to be affected, or too artificial!

Thus, which ever way we turn ourſelves, whether we conſider the *poetical ſpirit*, the *language*, or the *verſification*; in each of them the beauties far exceed the defects. It is with this notion we ought to proceed in our inquiries: we muſt carry this thought all along with us. Let us remember, Philypſus, "That all hu-
"man excellence ſtands merely on compariſon:
"that no one is without faults, and that very
"few arrive in any tolerable degree towards
"per-

" perfection: that Mr. Pope does not only ap-
" pear among the few, but that his ſuperiority
" is every way viſible: if we compare his com-
" poſitions in general with thoſe of our other
" poets, the diſproportion is as great, as when
" we compare the blemiſhes of his own poetry,
" with the beauties which every-where abound
" in it."

Some of theſe we are now to conſider; and we may enter on this view with the greater pleaſure, as we have the advantage of Mr. Pope's own obſervations in ſeveral points, both as to thoſe things, in which he met with the greateſt difficulty; and the methods he has taken of raiſing his language, and improving the verſification.

One of the greateſt ſources of raiſing, as well as enlarging the poetical language, is by inventing new words, or importing old ones from a foreign ſoil. Words, when they are us'd vulgarly, grow mean: like other faſhions, when their uſe is once got among the populace, they ſoon begin to be rejected by the politer part of the world. This it is (as the *(a) gentlemen* of *Port-Royal* very juſtly obſerve) which neceſſitates the introducing of new words into every language; it occaſions a continual decay, and demands continual ſupplies. Thus, whoever has a felicity this way, is a benefactor to the publick: he adds ſo much to the bank; and gives his aſſiſtance in ſupporting the preſent credit of language among us.

(a) *Art de bien parler*, Part 1. Chap. 4. Sect. 5.

It wou'd be equally trifling and laborious, to give all the particular inſtances of this verſion's enriching our language. It is every-where viſible; there is no reading a book in the *Odyſſey*, without obſerving it frequently. You will almoſt conſtantly find Mr. Pope's new words to be apt, eaſy, and poetical. Sometimes he introduces the expreſſions, and even the *peculiarities* of other languages into our own: theſe, when unforc'd, pleaſe us very particularly, by the variety and novelty they bring along with them. We admire the ſtranger in our habit; and are extremely taken to ſee him look as free and eaſy as if he were a native, and had been always truly Engliſh.

The poet has the ſame art and delicacy in *connecting* two words into one, a thing much more difficult than *inventing*: the union is proper and inſenſible; there is no knot, where they are ingrafted: in ſhort, they *(a)* may be ſaid rather to grow into one another, than to be brought together by art. I do not ſay, that this hits ſo naturally in all inſtances; there may be *(b)* ſome words leſs tractable, or leſs harmonious than others: but in general we may affirm, that as his tranſlation is wrought off from a language, which, in this reſpect, greatly exceeds all that ever were; ſo the imitations of of it, this way, are unuſually beautiful and harmonious.

(*a*) Thus: *melliſluous, attemper'd, ever-ſhady, ill-perſuading, ſerpent-mazes*; and ſeveral others in this tranſlation.

(*b*) Thus, perhaps: *ſea-girt, end-long, love-dittied, woman-ſtate*, &c. in the ſame.

To

To deviate from the ſtrict rules which Grammarians wou'd impoſe on words, either ſingle, or as they ſtand in their relations to one another, gives an agreeable uncommon air to language; but in the very notion of it carries ſomething of difficulty and niceneſs along with it. Mr. Pope ſeems to have thought it the ſafeſt way in ſuch caſes to follow or reſemble thoſe deviations, which have been already authoriz'd by ſome maſterly hand: and where he ſtrikes more boldly into any new freedom, he is generally careful of giving things ſuch an openneſs, that they may neither perplex the ſenſe, nor embaraſs the period.

A thing more uſeful and agreeable than either of theſe, is to turn the ſtream of words out of their common channel.——— There is a good deal of ſtiffneſs, which yet attends our language, from the ſtated order of words in ſuch a repeated ſucceſſion; and tho' we are much freer than our neighbours the French in this particular, I ſhou'd be glad to ſee our Poets, at leaſt, go yet farther towards the liberties of the old Greeks and Romans. Mr. Pope has ſome ſtrokes towards this: he is ſometimes bold in varying the expected range of words, to give his ſentences a new and agreeable air; he tranſpoſes their order, often by his own judgment, and often in imitation of ſome of our beſt poets, who have ſucceeded in it before.

I wou'd not have a certain Grammarian, or two, over-hear me commending theſe liberties ſo freely: it would certainly coſt one a diſpute. You know the men: they are as ſtrict in the punctilio's of words, as ſome formal people are

in the little points of behaviour. I warrant you, your neighbour, the Doctor, would ſtand as ſtrictly upon the *nominative caſe's going before the verb*, as Wicquefort wou'd for the precedence of an ambaſſador: 'tis certain he can ſettle all the rules of place from undeniable authorities; diſpoſes of the upper-hand with perfect œconomy; and, upon the whole, would make an excellent *maſter of the ceremonies* among words and ſyllables.

However, with this gentleman's leave, there are ſeveral juſt *liberties* which may be allow'd for varying the poetical (*a*) ſtyle; and many aids, proper to enliven and elevate it in the more noble parts of a poem.

Among the latter, Mr. Pope has made very good uſe of antiquated words; and no leſs of expreſſions borrow'd from our tranſlation of the ſacred writings. The language of Scripture, as it is receiv'd from the firſt with a certain religious awe, will ſtill retain ſomething venerable and auguſt: it may therefore be of ſignal ſervice in giving to the heroick muſe that majeſty, which ſo well becomes the ſublime air ſhe ought to aſſume. 'Tis much the ſame in the revival of old words: antiquity always carries a ſort of ſolemnity with it, in its very roughneſſes and decays: the *ruſtick* ſtrikes the mind as ſtrongly as any thing in architecture; and *ruins* themſelves have often ſomething awful and majeſtick in them.

(*a*) Plurimæ ſint locutiones *apud poetas uſitatiſſimæ*, & in primis *elegantes*, quæ ſcriptis proſaicis uſurpatæ etiam grammaticæ leges violant. See Trapp's Præl. Poet. p. 49, &c. to p. 53.

I wou'd

I wou'd not willingly interrupt you (ſays Philypſus;) but the humour of heaping ſuper-annuated words in ſome late poems, is too provoking to be paſs'd by. How have our Miltonick writers, in particular, proſtituted them on all occaſions! in what an undiſtinguiſhing manner do they labour to draw into their works any word, which their great maſter has adopted into his *Paradiſe Loſt!*——*Erſt*, *Nathleſs*, *Behеſts*, *Welkin*, and a thouſand other expreſſions of equal beauty and agreeableneſs of ſound, are repeated ten times in every ſheet of theirs: in ſhort, theſe gentlemen have made me quite ſick of people's going two hundred years backward for their language; and furniſhing out half their poems from the vocabularies annex'd to Spencer and Chaucer.

As for ſome of thoſe writers (reply'd Antiphaus calmly) you have reaſon to be angry with them; but if we may reject any thing merely for the *abuſe* of it, there is nothing of the greateſt *uſe*, that we may not fairly reject. Virgil made particular uſe of this method in his poems, and was (*b*) admir'd by his countrymen on that account: what is your opinion of our Milton? Are you diſpleas'd with the antiquated words in his writings? No, Philypſus, I know your taſte too well to imagine any thing of that nature. And even of thoſe, that have follow'd his example, there is one or two who

(*b*) Cum ſint verba propria, ficta, tranſlata; propriis dignitatem dat *antiquitas*: *eo ornamento Virgilius unicè eſt uſus.* *Quintil. Inſtit.* Lib. 8. Cap. 2. *Again*, Lib. 9. Cap. 3.

make good uſe of them. This we ſee in Philips's pieces; not to mention the new (c) poem we were reading the other day: the author of which, beſide ſeveral other beauties, is by no means unhappy in his management of this ſort of words. I agree with you, the *abuſe* of them is frequent, and much to be condemn'd: if perpetual, they run into a mere barbariſm; and indeed where-ever they are thruſt in, without any other reaſon except their being ancient, they give a roughneſs and diſorder, inſtead of the proper ſolemnity: but when they are plac'd here and there with judgment, they ſupport the greatneſs of our ideas, and reflect a venerableneſs on the ſubject. Were the old oaks, that are left ſtanding in the gardens of Blenheim, more numerous, that deſign might have too much of the foreſt in it: but as they are, they ſerve to communicate the nobler air of antiquity to the things about them; and appear in a majeſty of years, equal to the grandeur of the place.

I would deſire you to commend the inſertion of ſolemn words, only as they are proper to the places in which they are us'd. We ſee by Mr. Pope's obſervations on this head, that he underſtands the benefit of them perfectly well; as his works ſhew that he practiſes up to his own rules; and ſcarce ever inſerts either the words of former centuries, or the language of ſcripture, but where the ſubject demands a ſolemn and venerable turn.

(c) WINTER. By Mr. Thompſon.

As

As these are the chief methods of *ennobling* the poetick style; so the chief to *enliven* it, is the free and various use of *epithets*. No one thing is of greater service to the poets for distinguishing their language from prose. This has occasioned that *(d)* large and unrestrained use of them, so much beyond what we find in oratory: and tho' Homer is more bold and frequent in this, than any of the poets who have wrote since, I know not any of the *ancient* criticks who have ever blamed him on that account. 'Tis partly from his uncommon liberties this way, that Mr. Pope looks upon his epithets, as one of the *(e)* *distinguishing marks* of that poet. In Homer they have, on several accounts, a peculiar air: and this translation not only preserves their proper beauties, but shews many methods of improving upon them. Sometimes the old are set in a stronger light, and sometimes new ones added with a peculiar grace: sometimes several are applied to the same thing, without *(f)* that strictness of connexion, which would *(g)* flatten the energy of them; and where the poverty of our language will not convey their full sense in the conciseness of the original, they are enlarged upon in the translation, and laid more open to our view.

(*d*) Eo (*epitheto*) poetæ & frequentiùs & liberiùs utuntur: Namque illis satis est convenire verbo, cui apponitur: & ita *Dentes albi*, & *Humida Vina* in his non reprehenduntur. *Quintil. Instit.* Lib. 8. Cap. 6.

(*e*) Pref. to *Il.* p. 21.

(*f*) Huge, horrid, vast! *Od.* 5. 227, —— 175.

(*g*) Τὸ τοιοῦτο, κυρτὰ, φαληρίοωντα, τῇ ἐξαιρέσει τοῦ συνδέσμου μεγαλεῖότερον ἀπέβη. *Dem. Phal.* ξδ'.

Epithets,

Epithets, Philypſus, like pictures in miniature, are often intire deſcriptions in one word. This may be either from their own ſignificance, or by their immediate connexion with ſome known object. We ſee the thing, when the poet only mentions the *nodding creſt* of an hero; and form a larger idea of *Jove* from the ſingle epithet of *cloud-compelling*, than we might find in a deſcription more diffuſe. It was chiefly from (*h*) *two poetical epithets*, that Phidias deſigned the countenance of his Olympian Jupiter; as, in reverſe, we often ſee the perſon in his epithet, from our being acquainted with ſome ſtatue, or picture, to which it refers: Thus when Apollo is called the *archer-god*, it recalls to our memory the repreſentations we have ſo often ſeen of that deity: the complete figure is rais'd up in the mind, by touching upon that ſingle circumſtance.

'Tis by the ſame means, that one ſingle epithet gives us the idea of any object, which has been common and familiar to us. Meadows, fields, woods, rivers, and the ſea itſelf, are often imag'd by one well-choſen word. Thus in that (*i*) beautiful deſcription of Calypſo's bower, you ſee the groves *of living green*; the alders *ever quivering*; the *nodding* cypreſs, and its high branches, *waving* with the ſtorm. 'Tis by epithets that the ancient poets paint their Elyſian groves; and the modern, their Windſor foreſts.

(*h*) See Mr. *Pope*'s note on *Il.* 1. 683.
(*i*) See *Od.* 5, 85.

Where our language will not admit of this conciſeneſs, we find the image preſerved by a deſcription more full and diffuſive: Thus,

—The morning ſun increaſing bright, [light.
(k) O'er heav'n's pure azure ſpreads the growing

I ſhould think that the opening of the ſenſe in a larger compaſs may often be approved, even where we are not driven to it by the poverty of our language. *Homer* himſelf, who has the advantage of ſingle words ſo much ſtronger and more ſignificant, often chuſes to draw out his ſentiments into ſeveral lines, and ſometimes (l) the very ſame ſentiment, which upon other occaſions he has expreſſed in one word only. May not the ſame liberty be allowed to his tranſlators? Is it not a fine enlargement, for inſtance, where Homer is ſpeaking of Penelope's veil with the epithet of *pellucid* only, to ſay that "the tranſparent veil

"(m) Her beauty ſeems, and only ſeems to ſhade."

Tho' the imaging and deſcriptive ſort of epithets may be the more beautiful; thoſe which add ſtrength and emphaſis are by no means to be contemned. This way they are of great ſervice in all *ſatire*; and particularly in that abuſiveneſs, which Homer is not over-nice in

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(k) *Od.* 9, 67,---56.

(l) Νώσοφι, which is beautifully expreſs'd by *Horace* in three words (*nimium lubricus aſpici*) is enlarged by *Homer* himſelf, on a fit occaſion, into three lines: Compare Ιλ. λ'. 16. with ν'. 340.

(m) *Od.* 18, 250,---209. Διπαρά.

beſtow-

beſtowing upon his gods: they appear well in the ridicule of the ſuitors; and are ſtrong and vehement in any *arrogant character*, particularly in all contemners of the gods. I ſhall give you only one inſtance of the latter, from Polypheme's anſwer to Ulyſſes:

Fools that you are! (the monſter made reply,
His inward fury blazing at his eye)
Or ſtrangers diſtant far from our abodes,
To bid me rev'rence or regard the Gods.
Know, that we Cyclops are a race above
(a) Thoſe *air-bred people*, and their *goat-nurs'd* Jove.

You muſt have obſerved (Philypſus) ſeveral other Methods of uſing epithets poetically. I need not mention the peculiar fitneſs and ſtrength, which they may acquire, from the (b) *occaſions* on which they are uſed, or the *light* they are ſet in: That (c) *ſubſtantives* are ſometimes uſed as *epithets*; and ſometimes (d) *epithets* as *ſubſtantives*: Sometimes the (e) *metaphor* is convey'd this way with a good grace; and at others, two *thwarting ideas* are mixt together in a very agreeable manner. Mr. Addiſon is the firſt I know of, that obſerved upon theſe, and gave them their name; and of this kind is the (f) *vegetable venom* in the fourth

(a) *Od.* 9, 330,---276.
(b) *Od.* 23, 217, compared with verſe 227.
(c) *Od.* 1, 389,---299.
(d) *Od.* 19, 110,---93.
(e) *Od.* 10, 291.
(f) *Od.* 4, 320,---230.

Odyſſey, which anſwers (*g*) his inſtance of *aurum frondens* from Virgil.

I know not whether I perfectly apprehend you, or not (interpoſed Philypſus): Do you not mean that particular ſort of metaphor, when ſome ſtrange *quality* in a thing is turned into an *epithet*, and directly applied to it?——Either that, or elſe ſome ſtrange circumſtance applied in the ſame manner: in both 'tis the novelty, and the ſurprize that pleaſe us.——I take you, ſays Philypſus; and believe I now ſee a farther reaſon, why a very natural paſſage (in another poem by Mr. Pope) has always been ſo agreeable to me. 'Tis where he ſpeaks of the odd appearance of things from their inverſion in a river: I think I can repeat it:

Oft in the ſtream--the muſing ſhepherd ſpies
The headlong mountains, and the downward ſkies,
The wat'ry landſkip of the pendant woods,
And abſent trees, that tremble in the floods;
In the clear azure gleam the flocks are ſeen,
(*b*) And floating foreſts paint the waves with green.

Theſe are of the kind I mean, ſays Antiphaus; they are bold, but they are natural: Indeed, with due caution, greater contrarieties than theſe may be joined, under ſome particular circumſtance, to juſtify ſo unexpected an union. Thus all epithets, which contradict the general ſenſe of the thing, but agree with

(*g*) *Addiſon's Miſc.* Vol. 1. p. 245. 12*mo*.
(*b*) *Windſor-Foreſt*, p. 59. folio.

the

the particular occaſion: Thus is *grief* called *pleaſing*; there are *kindneſſes* which are *terrible (i)*: And in many caſes *death* and even *diſgrace* may be *deſireable*. Inſtances of this kind are very frequent, eſpecially among our modern poets. There are (*k*) many in this tranſlation: in particular, 'tis this which gives a new air to that gay (*l*) ſpeech of Mercury in the eighth book.

Tho' the Latins uſed this agreeable claſh of ideas, the Greek poets (as Mr. Addiſon (*m*) obſerves on the former head) *wanted art for it*: They, at leaſt the more ancient of them, never join things that ſeem to diſagree, in ſo cloſe an union. Unleſs where Nature herſelf has led the way in an (*n*) actual mixture of contrarieties: in any point, except that ſingle one, theſe muſt be intirely improvements on the original.

The misfortune is, that in all human excellencies there will be an alloy: faults ſpring out of our improvements themſelves; and the very methods of beautifying lead often into blemiſhes. The way to any perfection is full of difficulties and windings on each ſide; and every ſtep out

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(*i*) As when the *Cyclops*, in the height of his good-nature, promiſes *Ulyſſes*, that he ſhall be the laſt he will devour. *Od.* 9.

(*k*) *Od.* 1, 449.- -353. 15, 435,----399. *otherwiſe* 12, 52. 18, 284, &c.

(*l*) Verſe 38c---342.

(*m*) *Miſc.* Vol. 1. p. 254. 12mo.

(*n*) Thus in the *Twilight*, when we have really a ſort of *viſible Darkneſs*, *Homer* uſes an Epithet of the ſame contrariety: Ἀμφιλυκὴ νύξ, i. e. Darkneſs tinged every way with Light. Il. ν. 433.

of

of the right path (tho' they croſs each other every moment) is a wandering from our deſign. In a word, Philypſus, 'tis much the ſame with errors and improvements, as it is with pleaſure and pain in the philoſopher's fable: they are blended together in ſuch a manner, that it is impoſſible to come at the one, without touching upon the other.

All the methods which are uſed in Mr. Pope's tranſlation, and which are ſo often of great efficacy towards beautifying and improving the diction, may ſometimes fall under a different character.

Among the words which are introduced from other languages into our own, there may be (o) ſome, which ſtill retain too much of the air of foreigners: As antiquated words may (p) look too groteſque, or have a rough, diſagreeable ſound. The very ſolemnity of ſcriptural expreſſions may ſometimes require that they ſhould not be (q) alienated: at leaſt it may make them look (r) too high for the paſſages in which they are inſerted.

Next to the importing of words new to the poetical ſtyle, is the varying the uſe of the old. To deviate from the ſtrictneſs of grammar, is what gave a riſe to rhetorick; and ſurely there are few who would not prefer all the beautiful

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(o) Dexter, circumfuſile, variegated. *Od.* 15, 145.

(p) Seneſchal, viands, bev'rage, ireful. 3, 179.

(q) *Jupiter* is ſtil'd *God* (ſimply, *Od.* 3, 190,---158. Otós) *Neptune*, a God above the Gods. *Od.* 13, 176.

(r) To thee a Son is given---*Od.* 18, 207. And---Food in the deſart land, behold, is giv'n.-- *Od.* 10, 204,--175.

forms

forms and figures of the latter (at leaſt for poetry and oratory) to that bare correctneſs, which alone is the province of the former: Yet there may be innovations on this too harſh or daring; and figures, that may look more like patch-work, than true ornaments in the dreſs of poetry.

The greater danger is, when the poet aſſumes (*s*) any common word in a new unuſual ſenſe. The worſt fault of any language is ambiguity; that great cauſe of darkneſs in verſe, and the continuer of every diſpute that has been kept up for any time in proſe. The various appearances of words, Philypſus, ſhould not be multiply'd unneceſſarily: the reader is apt to be diſtracted between ſo many lights; and in ſuch a variety, is more likely to follow the falſe, than the true.

I have obſerved this particularly in words derived from other languages: theſe, you know, often prevail among us very differently from their native ſignification. The Latin *ſenſe* perhaps is one thing, and the Engliſh *uſe* another: When this has obtained univerſally, we ought not to run back to the Latin (*t*) ſenſe of the word, in our uſe of it. If you ſhould, the learned themſelves may not readily fall into your meaning, and the unlearned will inevitably miſtake it.

(*s*) *Flown* (with Inſolence) *Od.* 1, 292. *Filial* (for a Daughter) 6, 67.

(*t*) *Partial*, *Od.* 8, 185. *Succinct*, 17, 200. *Objected*, 7, 54. *Implicit*, 9, 514.

It

It may be inquir'd too, how far this tranſlation may make a wrong uſe of terms borrow'd from any of the arts and ſciences: as where we read of *architraves*, *colonnades*, and the like. I would not produce theſe as undoubted faults in the poetical ſtile: tho' the baniſhing *all technical words* be laid down by ſome criticks as a rule never to be tranſgreſſed, I ſhould imagine they might be admitted in ſome caſes; even where there is not that abſolute neceſſity, either of uſing them, or loſing the ſenſe of the original.

Will not the very thing, on which the rule is founded, allow the departing from it ſometimes? "*That the poet writes to all mankind* "*in general*;" and "*That he ſhould avoid all* "*appearance of labour, as well as affectation*," is very true; and very good reaſons they are for his not uſing technical words, while they carry difficulty, and an air of affectation, about them: But if ſuch words ever happen to be perfectly familiarized by the writings of former poets, or become of common uſe in the world, I ſhould think they have the ſame right to be admitted into poetry (and if not mean, the ſame propriety) as any other words, the moſt obvious and intelligible. Any one may diſtinguiſh their greater or leſs fitneſs, on this account, in the deſcription of Alcinous's palace: in which there are ſeveral inſtances, both of terms familiarized, and of ſuch as are leſs allowable, under one and the ſame view:

The

The *front* appear'd with radiant ſplendors gay,
Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day.
The walls were maſſy braſs; the *cornice* high
Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the ſky:
Rich plates of gold the *folding-doors incaſe*;
The pillars ſilver, on a brazen *baſe*;
Silver the *lintels deep-projecting* o'er,
(*a*) And gold the *ringlets* that command the door.

Some of theſe terms are certainly allowable; and you will think perhaps I carry the matter too far in another point, which may ſeem as allowable to the full. You muſt know, I am apt to imagine, that not only the more difficult terms of art, but even ſuch words as are (*b*) *uſurped* more particularly in any ſingle province, may become leſs fit to be us'd in common. If ſo, it may require caution in inſerting ſome that are *appropriated* to particular perſons or things, many that are us'd much in the *pro-*

(*a*) *Od.* 7, 117,--90.

(*b*) Thus there is ſomething which does not ſound intirely right in theſe lines:

Full ſhines *the Father* in the *Filial Frame*, *Od.* 4, 199.
He ceas'd: the *Filial Virtue* made reply, 22, 167.
Mean time *Arete* for the Hour of Reſt
Ordains the fleecy Couch ——————7, 428.
The Peers reproach the ſure *Divine* of Fate, 20, 432.

Within the *Structure* of the Palace Wall, 22, 186.
Impoſthumate with Pride----20, 358.
With *Venial* Freedom let me now demand
Thy Name----1, 219.
There cling *implicit*, and confide in *Jove*, 9, 514.

The *Seneſchal* rebuk'd, in haſte withdrew, 4, 47.
A *Cenotaph* I raiſe of deathleſs Fame, 4, 794.

feſſions,

ſſions, eſpecially in the *ſcholaſtick* way of diſ-
inctions, and all in general that are perplexed,
r not to be underſtood without difficulty.

I'm afraid I have tired you, Philypſus, with
ch a ſtring of dry obſervations: they muſt
ave their turn in a view of this nature; and
o omit what is neceſſary, for fear of an impu-
tion of pedantry, is perhaps the worſt pedan-
y one can be guilty of.

Give me leave to inlarge more upon the abuſe
f epithets, as I did before upon the uſe of
em. 'Tis the ſame with theſe, Philypſus, as
ith all other ornaments of ſpeech; their being
o very ſerviceable, may lead to a larger uſe of
em than is proper: but there is this advantage
o; the very thing which makes them ſo
rong and beautiful, will help to diſcover any
ror in their application. They are each con-
ected ſo immediately to their ſubject, that
eir impropriety, as well as agreement, is very
ſily diſcern'd.

On (*c*) this account, we ſhould be the more
autious how we mix the epithets of the *pro-*
er, with any *metaphorical* expreſſions: theſe
or the time change their nature, and may ſig-
ify things very different from what they ſtood
or before. That metaphor, which puts the
ame of a *place* or *country* for its *inhabitants*,
reckon'd a great and agreeable one; but

(*c*) Δεῖ καὶ τὰ ἐπίθετα καὶ τὰς μεταφορὰς ὁρματίδσας λέγειν· ἔστι δ' ἔσαι ἐκ τοῦ ἀναλόγου· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἄτοπος φανεῖται, διὰ τὰ παράλληλα τὰ ἐναντία μάλιστα φαίνεσθαι. *Ariſtot. Rhet.* Lib. 3. cap. 2.

where-

where-ever it is uſed, we muſt remember it ſtands now for *Men*, and is not to be conſider'd in its proper ſtate, as a *part of the earth*. If its old epithets are ſtill applied to it, the ſenſe muſt be diſagreeing and confus'd.

I fear we meet with ſomething of this, where Penelope complains of the numbers and importunity of her ſuitors, after this manner:

Zacynthus, green with ever-ſhady groves,
And Ithaca, preſumptuous boaſt their loves;
Obtruding on my choice a ſecond lord,
(*d*) They preſs the Hymenæan rite.—

Longinus, (*e*) ſomewhere in his treatiſe on the *Sublime*, gives us an inſtance of this ſort of metaphor, from Herodotus, where that hiſtorian is ſpeaking of a very moving tragedy, *at the acting of which the theatre burſt into tears*: this the critick judges to be ſo taking, from the ſurprize that turn of expreſſion carries with it. The metaphor itſelf has certainly ſomething great in it: but had Herodotus join'd ſome of its proper epithets or deſcription with this metaphor, and ſaid, that "*The theatre, rais'd all on co-*"*lumns of the Corinthian order, burſt into* "*tears at the deepneſs of the tragedy*," Longinus might have thought the paſſage more *ſurpriſing*; but I dare ſay he would not have thought it ſo worthy of his commendation.

To mix theſe things in a deſcription is really as abſurd, as to paint a *River-God*, not with

(*d*) *Od.* 19, 155,-----131.
(*e*) Cap. 24. Ed. *Oxon*, 1718.

his

his *urn*, to ſignify what he is; but guſhing all over into ſtreams, like ſome of the odd figures in Ovid's *metamorphoſis*. And by the way, it may be a very good (*f*) rule that is given, to try mixt metaphors at any time; by forming in one's mind a picture from what is ſaid, and conſidering how the parts of it would agree, were they delineated upon canvas.

There is another diſagreement in epithets, when two expreſſions, proper in themſelves, are yet join'd together improperly. After a great Slaughter we may very well have a notion of *Heaps, or* (as it is in the Poetical Language) *Mountains of the Slain*; 'tis natural on the ſame occaſion to imagine to ourſelves their Wounds, and the *Blood ebbing* out of them: theſe are very proper ſeparately; but to join them under the notion of a (*g*) *Bleeding Mountain*, does not look ſo reconcileable to the mind.

An error yet more frequent is, when we give a word that epithet, which is proper to it on ſome occaſions, indifferently at all times, and without any occaſion.

This, in ſome meaſure, has been always allowable in verſe: however ſuch a liberty is not without its bounds, nor ſhould it be uſed intemperately. *Purple* (for inſtance) is an epithet very frequent in the ancient poets for the habit of princes: yet it is not to be given to that of all great men; nor of princes equally, whether

(*f*) *Spectator*, No. 595.
(*g*) *Od.* 22, 135,---118.

(*h*) young or old; nor of the very ſame prince, under ſeveral circumſtances. Tho' a remark of this kind may ſeem inſignificant enough, the neglect of it in practice is often very groſs and ſhocking.

Again: what is proper in one language, may not be ſo in another. Was any one to tranſlate the *purpureis oloribus* of *Horace*, *purple Swans*, would not he be ſo *literal*, as to miſs the *Senſe* of his author intirely? The ſame I ſuſpect a little in this, and ſeveral other of our poets, who generally tranſlate the *Purpureum mare* of the *Latins*, and Πορφύρεον πέλαγος of the *Greeks*, by *purple ſeas*.

There may be another impropriety from the difference of time and circumſtances: It may do very well to give the epithet of *browzing* to a goat; or *grazing* to the ox: it helps to deſcribe them in the fields, or to diſtinguiſh them from ſome other creatures; and if neither of theſe, at leaſt it gives the language a poetical air: Yet theſe epithets have ſome reſtraints, they belong to life and action; they do not ſuit with thoſe very creatures when dead; and leſs ſo, when they are cut out in the ſhambles, or ſerved up at a feaſt: This is the caſe in a paſſage relating to *Penelope*'s ſuitors; they,

——A luxurious race, indulge their chear;
Devour the *grazing ox*, and *browzing goat*,
(*i*) And turn the gen'rous vintage down their throat.

(*h*) Δεῖ σκοπεῖν, ὡς νῦν φαινηται, ὅταν γέροντί τι· ἢ γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ ἁρμοττει ἑκάστῳ. *Ariſt. Rhet.* Lib. 3. cap. 2.

(*i*) *Od.* 17, 621,----585.

As

As epithets ſhould be proper to the *things*, or *perſon*, they are applied to; ſo muſt we take care that they are ſtill proper to the *metaphors* we add; and in allegory, not to confound the epithets of the *real*, with thoſe of the *fictitious perſon*.

In the preface to the Iliad *(k)* we have an excellent diſtinction to this purpoſe, on a known *(l)* epithet of Apollo; "which (as we are there "told) is capable of two explications; one li-"teral, in reſpect of the darts and bow, the "enſigns of that god; the other allegorical, "with regard to the rays of the ſun: therefore "in ſuch places, where Apollo is repreſented "as a god in perſon, I would uſe the former "interpretation; and where the effects of the "ſun are deſcribed, I would make choice of "the latter." You ſee the juſtneſs of the obſervation: it may ſerve to explain my meaning better than I could expreſs it myſelf.

'Tis evident, by the way, that Mr. Pope form'd this obſervation upon his experience in the progreſs of that tranſlation: this appears from the firſt part of that work, in which we ſometimes find the properties and effects of the ſun, blended with the perſonal acts of Apollo: thus it is in the firſt appearance of that deity in the poem. I ſhall read the paſſage to you, though ſomething long: it begins with that beautiful line,

(k) Page 22. 12*mo*.
(l) Ἑκάεργος.

Silent (*m*) he wander'd by the ſounding ſhore:
Till ſafe at diſtance to his God he prays,
That God, who *darts around the world his rays.*
O Smintheus, ſprung from fair Latona's line,
Thou guardian power of Cilla the divine,
Thou *ſource of light*, whom Tenedos adores,
And whoſe *bright* preſence *gilds* thy Chryſa's ſhores;
God of the ſilver bow! thy ſhafts employ,
(*n*) Avenge thy ſervant, and the Greeks deſtroy.

The original here does not once attribute any thing to the deity but what is perſonal: 'tis certain the ſun and its effects are hid under this allegory; but then they muſt be hid: for ſo far as it appears, it will ceaſe to be allegory. Homer never mixes ſhadows and reality; and as Mr. Pope perceived this in his going on with the poem, I preſume he built upon it that excellent obſervation.

Any mixture of this nature is more evident in epithets, for that obvious reaſon I mention'd before. And thus, you ſee, there are inconveniences attend each method of improving the poetical diction; and that the danger bears ſome proportion to the excellence. Where the finest colourings are employed, the faulty ſtrokes of the pencil are the ſooner perceived. The nobleſt efforts of human art are not without their defects. Of all doctrines, I ſhall never hold that, which ſuppoſes any man to be infallible; and of all men, the poet of a true, free, glow-

(*m*) *Chryſes.*
(*n*) *Il.* 1, 60,---42.

ing ſpirit, muſt naturally be incapable of that character. No, Philypſus, the moſt *correct* writer is he that has the *feweſt* faults: and he is the *nobleſt* poet that has moſt diſtinct excellencies.

'You need not repeat, ſays Philypſus, what you have thoroughly convinced me of long ſince. Yes, 'tis the (*o*) condition of every human performance, not to be abſolutely perfect. I can allow of ſeeing faults in any the moſt favourite piece, and find a freſh and greater pleaſure every day in reading an author without that biaſs, which uſed to make me admire every thing I read. Yet I muſt own my infirmity to you, I ſtill find it very difficult to arrive to that indifference you would perſuade me to, in any tolerable degree.

A perfect indifference (anſwer'd Antiphaus is no more attainable, than a perfect excellence, by a creature made up of ſo many paſſions as man is. We muſt poiſe ourſelves with all the ſteadineſs we are maſters of; and when thoſe diſturbers will be interfering, the beſt way is to turn their own artillery upon them, and to play one paſſion upon another. If the ſuperior merit of a writer, or his engaging way, is apt to captivate us ſo far as to raiſe any partial regards in us; we muſt ſtop, and conſider what we owe to truth, the moſt beautiful and commanding thing in the world: on the contrary,

(*o*) Whoever thinks a faultleſs piece to ſee,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er ſhall be.
Pope's Eſſay on Criticiſm.

wherever we begin to feel a malicious pleaſure in finding out the faults of great men, we muſt break off that humour as ſoon as perceiv'd, by turning immediately to ſome of the fineſt paſſages in their works, and indulging that delight and admiration they raiſe in us.

I do this (reply'd Philypſus) and yet it is but too frequently that I find myſelf more engaged than I ought to be, after all my endeavours: how happy ſhould I be, could I have that command of my temper, which Antiphaus ſhews upon all occaſions!

If you have obſerved any thing in me of that nature (ſays Antiphaus interrupting him) it is chiefly owing to the obſervance of this rule. "When we are thinking of any particular "paſſage, to forget the character of the author: "and when we are ſpeaking of the character "of the author, to forget the turn of any "particular paſſage." Our notion of a poem is not to be influenced by a few lines, taken here and there from it: the only thing by which it can be juſtly determined, is the balance of the account, after reckoning up all its beauties and all its defects againſt one another. I mean not only as to their number, but according to the real *value*, or *alloy* that is in them. But what am I doing, Philypſus? to talk at this rate, while I might be enjoying your obſervations?—The things I have heard you ſpeak of at different times, make me long to ſee them in one collected view. We are here ſafe from the impertinence of buſineſs, or viſits; and may enjoy ourſelves at large, without being interrupted by either.

I am ſenſible (anſwer'd Philypſus after a ſhort pauſe) that what you particularly mean, is the improvements in Mr. Pope's tranſlation, from the many figures and variations added in that work: but as I am not prepared for a regular account of them, you will give me leave to mention them juſt as they come into my thoughts. My happineſs is, that I ſpeak to ſo generous a friend: I know Antiphaus too well to make apologies for the weakneſs of my obſervations, or the looſe manner in which I may lay my thoughts before him.

(o) "To be *clear*, and *not* to be *mean*, is "the great excellence of language. A ſtyle "that is made up wholly of *proper* words, will "be the cleareſt of any, but at the ſame time "it will neceſſarily be mean. On the contra- "ry, the improv'd *figurative* ſtyle is great; "but if it be crowded every-where with figures "and new turns, it muſt grow dark and bar- "barous."

If this rule be juſt, as it has ever been allowed to be, (quite down from the great father of criticiſm at Athens, to thoſe who flouriſh now in the academy of Paris) all additional figures in this tranſlation, which neither darken nor perplex the ſenſe, are ſo many new beauties and improvements upon the original.

For my part, I ſhould not ſtick at carrying this point farther; I ſhould imagine, that figures are the language of the paſſions. The body itſelf is agitated, and our features diſcom-

(o) From Ariſtotle's lib. de Poet. cap. 22.

poſed, when the mind is ſtruck violently with any object; and if we ſpeak upon ſuch occaſions, 'tis with rapidity and diſorder. We burſt out into exclamations: our ſentiments are quick and violent, and our language interrupted frequently with ſudden ſtarts, and as ſudden pauſes. Things appear then more ſtrong and largely to the mind; we paint them in more expreſſive colours, and with a greater energy of words. 'Tis this way of ſpeaking that gave riſe to what the criticks afterwards call'd figures. Theſe are the beautiful diſorders of language; they are in our words what ſudden agitations are in our minds; and tho' we may think them chiefly the effect of art, they are really ſome of the moſt natural ſtrokes in poetry.

When we are ſtruck ſuddenly with joy or ſorrow, hopes or fears, we break out in a ſhort quick manner of expreſſion. ——Ulyſſes, in the habit of a ſtranger, finds the good old Laertes ever ſorrowing for his abſence, and buſying himſelf in his garden, to divert the melancholy of his thoughts. The Hero does not diſcover himſelf immediately; only juſt mentions to him, that he had ſeen Ulyſſes in his travels. That is the point Laertes fixes upon: *This iſland you are landed upon* (ſays he) *is Ithaca*;

But tell me, ſtranger, be the truth confeſs'd,
What years have circled ſince thou ſaw'ſt that gueſt?
That hapleſs gueſt, alas! for ever gone!
Wretch that he was! and that I am! my ſon!

If

If ever man to miſery was born,
(p) 'Twas his to ſuffer, and 'tis mine to mourn!

Ulyſſes in his anſwer informs him where he had met with his ſon; and that when they parted, he flatter'd himſelf with hopes of ſeeing him again; but now, he found, he muſt deſpair of that happineſs. This was too much for Laertes to bear: we ſee him overcome with ſorrow. 'Tis now Ulyſſes's turn to be agitated, and to ſpeak his paſſions in the ſame impetuous manner:

He ran, he ſeiz'd him with a ſtrict embrace,
With thouſand kiſſes wander'd o'er his face,
"I, I am he; Oh father, riſe! behold,
"(q) Thy ſon!—

I can ſcarce leave the pleaſure I take in repeating theſe paſſages, only to tell you, that they are extremely improv'd by Mr. Pope. No one will imagine how much, that has not compar'd them with the original.

You ſee theſe paſſions break out in ſhort violent flaſhes: ſometimes they are ſo ſtrong as to permit no more than one word or two. When Euryclea by accident diſcovers Ulyſſes, ſhe can only cry out (r) *My ſon!—My king!*—And where any go farther, they rather *hint* at things than *mention* them: Their thoughts are full of ſtarts and hurry; they ſpeak with vehemence,

(p) *Od.* 24, 339, ——289.
(q) *Od.* 24, 376, ·····320.
(r) *Od.* 19, 554, ····475.

and often end abruptly. Thus Ulyſſes when he diſcovers himſelf to Telemachus:

I am thy father. O my ſon! my ſon!
That father, for whoſe ſake thy days have run
(s) One ſcene of woe, &c.

And in another place from a different paſſion:

O curſt event! and O unlook'd-for aid!
Melanthius, or the women have betray'd—
(t) Oh my dear ſon!—

Theſe paſſionate *breaks* are one of the fineſt things in poetry. They are as natural in anger, as they are in ſorrow or ſurprizes; and indeed in the former are proper ſooner, and upon leſs motives far than in theſe. I know not how it is, they have a particular aptneſs in all threats, and either intimate very ſtrongly, or are well fill'd up with ſome menacing action:

This choice is left you, to reſiſt or die;
(u) And die, I truſt, ye ſhall.——

Or, as in the *nineteenth* book,

Vagrant, be gone! before this blazing brand
(x) Shall urge—and wav'd it hiſſing in her hand.

(s) *Od.* 16, 208,-----189.
(t) *Od.* 22, 166,-----152.
(u) *Od.* 22, 81,---87.
(x) *Od.* 19, 85,---69.

You

You have puzzled me, ſays Antiphaus: now for my life can't I tell which to approve of moſt, the expreſſing, or the intimating the action in ſuch caſes: this requires the greateſt ſtrength in the poet, and the other has greater force in his performance. Oh, give me leave to mention one thing,—have you not obſerved a larger ſort of break, which is uſed artificially in a poem, to incite the attention of the reader? I mean, when the narration is dropt in the moſt engaging parts of it, or juſt before ſome very material incident: this adds a double deſire of hearing; the audience generally make it their requeſt, that the ſpeaker would go on, and inform them of the ſequel. Thus it is in the eleventh Odyſſey: Ulyſſes in the midſt of his account of the infernal regions *(y)* makes a feint of concluding; we are immediately told that the Phæacians were eager to hear him on; and it is obſervable, that the very ſame (z) break, and the very ſame ſentiment after it, is imitated by Virgil. 'Tis indeed improved in the latter; he has all the uſe of Homer's ſuſpenſe, without the tedioufneſs of it.

I have often taken notice of this artifice, ſays Philypſus. 'Tis very uſual in the cloſe of the particular books, not only of this poem, but equally of the Iliad and Æneid.—Were it not a thing pretty obvious in itſelf, I ſhould be apt to imagine, that it was from this practice of

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(y) *Od.* 11, 408,----328.——— Κηληθμῷ ——— ἔσχετο, Ver. 333. And Ver. 369, Alcinous deſires him to proceed.

---- (z) Donec Calchante miniſtro ———
Tum vero ardemus ſcitari.---- *Æn.* 2, 100 and 105.

Homer and Virgil, that thoſe prudent authors, who write for ſale, had learnt what is ſo common among them. Thus, in our books of adventures and romance, we ſeldom meet with a firſt part, which does not break off in ſuch a point of the ſtory, as may be moſt apt to engage the expectation of the reader; and to draw him in for that moſt tedious thing in the world, vulgarly called, *A ſecond part.*

There is yet another ſort of breaks, Antiphaus, which proceed not from the artifice of the writer, but the paſſion he feels upon ſome great or unexpected calamity. There might be inſtances of this given from the poem before us; but we muſt go to another piece of Mr. Pope's for the fineſt that ever I met with in my life. 'Tis in his charming Ode on Muſick, where he is ſpeaking of that great maſter of it, Orpheus:

(*a*) See, wild as the winds o'er the mountains he flies,
Hark, Hemus reſounds with the Bacchanals cries!
——Ah, ſee! he dies.

Thoſe paſſions, which break off our language in this manner, and confine it to ſhort catches and ſtarts, when they are wrought up to the higheſt pitch, or croud in many of them together upon the mind, are beſt expreſt by *ſilence.* Such ſilences as theſe (pardon me a paradox as old as (*b*) Pythagoras's times) are the

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(*a*) *Stanza* the 6th.

(*b*) Ἡ σιωπὴ ὑπὲρ τῦ θεῖα σοφισὴν (the diſciples of Pythagoras) ἐπήσκηλο· πολλά γ' θεῖα τε καὶ ἀπόῤῥητα ἤκουον· ἂν κρατῆν χαλεπὸ ἦν, μὴ πρῶτον μαθῶσιν, ὅτι καὶ ΤΟ ΣΙΩΠΑΝ ΛΟΓΟΣ. *Philoſtratus*, de vita *Apol.* lib. 1. cap. 1.

voice of nature. 'Tis true, in the common method of ſpeaking, there are only a few particular organs concern'd: but in ſtronger emotions, in the violence of any paſſion, the whole body may be talkative. Every look, and turn, and motion is ſignificant; and each nerve can have its ſhare in making up (what our Shakeſpear calls) *a kind of excellent dumb diſcourſe.*

To be more plain: our paſſions are often too ſtrong to be expreſs'd immediately by words, they often choak up the paſſage for them; and yet at the ſame time they are moſt apparent. The more any one is a ſtranger to art and diſguiſes, the more is he moved on theſe occaſions: theſe ſilences are the pure effects of nature; and the deſcriptions of them are ſome of the moſt natural, as well as moſt beautiful paſſages in the poem before us.

The recovery of Ulyſſes is the incident of the greateſt concern to all friends, and muſt be attended with the ſtrongeſt flow of paſſion in them: accordingly they are each too much mov'd with the diſcovery, to utter their ſentiments on that occaſion. Telemachus is the firſt to whom Ulyſſes makes himſelf known: he falls on his father's neck, and they continue embracing each other, without ſpeaking (*c*) for a conſiderable time. We have a like ſcene, (*d*) when he diſcovers himſelf to two or three ſelect friends. Good old Laertes, on the ſame

(*c*) *Od.* 16, 243,--220.
(*d*) *Od.* 21, 240,--226.

occaſion, is not only ſilent, but ſcarce (e) able to ſupport himſelf under ſuch an exceſs of paſſion; and the fond, tender Penelope is quite overcome with it:

(f) She ſickens, trembles, falls, and faints away.

A great ſurprize, or extraordinary fright, has the ſame effect: as in Homer's (g) Eurylochus, and the Sir Treviſan of Spenſer, which the notes (h) mention as a parallel to Eurylochus. Never was any image ſet in a fuller light than this of Spenſer's: 'tis preſented to our view with all the ſtrength that poetry is capable of. I muſt beg leave to read it to you:

He anſwer'd nought at all, but adding new
Fear to his firſt amazement, ſtaring wide
With ſtony eyes, and heartleſs hollow hue,
Aſtoniſh'd ſtood, as one that had eſpy'd
Infernal furies with their chains unty'd:
Him yet again, and yet again beſpake
The gentle Knight; who nought to him reply'd,
But trembling every joint, did inly quake.

Admirable imagery! and admirable ſilence! cry'd Antiphaus. But I hope you will not be ſo poſſeſs'd with the excellence of our poet, as to forget (i) the Ajax of Homer; whom Ulyſſes

(e) *Od.* 24, 404,---346.
(f) *Od.* 23, 212,---205.
(g) *Od.* 10, 288,---246.
(h)
(i) *Od.* 11, 665,---557.

beſpeaks

beſpeaks again, and yet again, without any anſwer at all. Or perhaps this has been obſerv'd upon ſo often, that you think it needleſs to repeat its beauties: I don't queſtion, but you admire it very much. I do ſo (anſwered Philypſus) and agree entirely with the obſervation, (*i*)" That Ajax has more the air of grandeur " when he ſays nothing, than when the poet " makes him ſpeak."

Mr. Pope does not only follow Homer very finely, where-ever he has led the way in theſe beautiful figures; he ſometimes heightens, and ſometimes adds them with a great deal of propriety. Every one ſees how unwilling Calypſo is to part with Ulyſſes: but the command of Jove muſt be obey'd: and the ſame fondneſs which makes her look on the departure of that hero with extreme regret, engages her, at the ſame time, to aſſiſt him in the conveniencies for it. She is always directing him, when employ'd; and when not, ſecretly diſſuading him from his voyage. We ſee her buſy, even to officiouſneſs, in bringing him the inſtruments for his work, guiding him to the foreſt, and ſhewing what trees are fitteſt for his purpoſe:

(*k*) On the lone iſland's utmoſt verge there ſtood
Of poplars, pines, and firs, a lofty wood,
Whoſe leafleſs ſummits to the skies aſpire,
Scorch'd by the ſun, or ſear'd by heav'nly fire,

(*i*) Note *ibid.* and *Longinus*, 6.
(*k*) *Od.* 5, 305,---238.

Already

Already dry'd.—Theſe pointing out to view,
The nymph juſt ſhew'd him, and with tears withdrew.

This is much better expreſs'd than in the original: indeed there we ſcarce diſcern that it is a paſſionate ſilence. Improvements of this kind, Antiphaus, are the more to be valued, becauſe there is not any one thing in poetry of greater beauty and energy. The criticks look upon it as the moſt (*l*) ſublime, unuſual part of eloquence: and 'tis none of its leaſt advantages, that it hits that excellent rule they give us, *Of (m) leaving ſome things for the audience to perceive of themſelves.* Though it be not told him, every man very eaſily finds out the heightening of ſuch a circumſtance; and is ſure to value it the more, becauſe he finds it out himſelf. In ſhort, theſe are maſterly ſtrokes, and few hands arrive to them in their true excellence. Though it requires the greateſt art and judgment to introduce it, the writer, when he has choſe the proper point, ſeems to be put to no pains to rule our affections: he governs all our paſſions without the labour of words; and looks as Archimedes would to one's fancy, moving the whole world, while he *ſits ſtill* himſelf.

Suſpenſe and Doubt have ſomething of this figure intermixt with them. A ſpeaker heſitating and unreſolv'd, is in a ſtate of *half-ſilence:*

(*l*) Φωνῆς δίχα θαυμάζεται πότε ψιλὴ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἔννοια δὲ αὐτὸ μεγαλοφρεν. Longinus, θ'. And Cicero, Rarum eſt eloquenter loqui; rariùs, eloquenter tacere. Ep. ad Atticum. L. 13.

(*m*) See Dem. Phal. Σκδ'.

As

As we ſee the former poetical ſilence is obſerved in Homer every time Ulyſſes diſcovers himſelf to any of his nearer friends; ſo is there a mixture of this doubtfulneſs alſo in each of thoſe interviews: thus Telemachus on that occaſion;

Thou art not—no, thou canſt not be my ſire;
Heav'n ſuch illuſion only can impoſe,
(n) By the falſe joy to aggravate my woes.

The *unravelling* of the doubt is what ſtrikes us moſt, both in Laertes and Penelope: in the latter caſe, this is deferr'd for too long a time; however, as they are, they are afford us ſome of the moſt pathetick paſſages in the whole poem. In what an affecting manner does Laertes appear to us juſt at the point of his being convinced, that the ſtranger he is converſing with, is his ſon!

Smit with the ſigns which all his doubts explain,
His heart within him melts; his knees ſuſtain
Their feeble weight no more: his arms alone
Support him, round the lov'd Ulyſſes thrown;
He faints, he ſinks with mighty joys oppreſt:
Ulyſſes claſps him to his eager breaſt.
Soon as returning life regains its ſeat,
And his breath lengthens, and his pulſes beat;
Yes, I believe, he cries: Almighty Jove!—
Heav'n rules us yet, and gods there are above.
(o) 'Tis ſo.———— ——

(n) *Od.* 16, 217,---195.
(o) *Od.* 24, 411,---351.

As to Penelope: Where a modern would have been overjoyed, and caught immediately at an occaſion for ſo many raptures, the Greek poet chuſes rather to ſhew her prudence than her paſſion. I believe every body will agree, that this *ſtill interval* is not ill-choſen: the fault of it is, its being carried through too many lines. The queen, no doubt, ſtruggled hard all the while; ſhe had difficulty enough in reſtraining herſelf; and the moment ſhe is convinced, ſhe is all tenderneſs and paſſion.

While yet he ſpeaks, her pow'rs of life decay,
She ſickens, trembles, falls, and faints away:
At length recovering, to his arms ſhe flew,
And ſtrain'd him cloſe, as to his breaſt ſhe grew;
The tears pour'd down amain: and, Oh, ſhe cries,
Let not againſt thy ſpouſe, thine anger riſe!
O! vers'd in every turn of human art,
Forgive the weakneſs of a woman's heart—
O let me, let me not thine anger move,
That I forbore—thus—thus—to ſpeak my love,
Thus in fond kiſſes, while the tranſport warms,
Pour out my ſoul, and die within thy arms!—
(p) I yield, I yield! my own Ulyſſes lives.

This unravelling of a *doubt* is generally followed by what is the moſt contrary to it of any thing in the world, *precipitation*. To doubt of any happy circumſtance, is to fear that it ſhould

(p) *Od.* 23, 240,---230.

not

not prove true. When we are agitated by the expectation of ſome bliſs, we long to indulge that flow of ſpirits which it occaſions; only ſome particular caution forces us to reſtrain them in the midſt of their career: the moment our doubt is clear'd, and the obſtacle removed, they ruſh on with the greater violence and impetuoſity. Then are our words quick and vehement; we ſpeak ſhort and faſt; a thouſand things we want to ſay, and are ſo eager we don't know which of them to ſay firſt. I know nothing in muſick that ſtrikes one equally to thoſe ſudden pauſes, when the concert ſtops at once; and after the ſtill interval, breaks out unexpectedly into a full tumult of harmony. This pauſe, and the impetuouſneſs that ſucceeds upon it, is the caſe (to carry on a ſcene, which we have touch'd upon twice or thrice already) when Telemachus recognizes his father: Telemachus wants to know every thing at once; and Ulyſſes wants to tell him every thing as faſt:

All, all, Ulyſſes inſtant made reply,
(q)I tell thee all, my ſon! ——.

Such an hurry of ſpirits, the more violent it is, makes us ſpeak in the more broken and interrupted manner. You always ſee that a crowd is the longeſt in getting out of a place, where they are in the greateſt haſte, and preſs moſt. When the paſſions are leſs diſturbed, they go in train, and follow one another eaſily;

(q) *Od.* 16, 249,---226.

but

but if they move all of them for a paſſage at the ſame time, they hinder one another. This ſort of Precipitation is very well expreſſed in Penelope, upon receiving Telemachus after his voyage:

Few words ſhe ſpoke, tho' much ſhe had to ſay,
And ſcarce thoſe few for tears cou'd force their way.
Light of my eyes! he comes!—Unhop'd-for joy!
Has heaven from Pylos brought my lovely boy?
So ſnatch'd from all our cares! Tell, haſt thou known
(r) Thy father's fate? and tell me all thy own.

You cannot imagine, Antiphaus, the full heightning of this paſſage, without comparing it with the original. 'Tis the ſame caſe in moſt that I have mentioned; they are ſome of the juſteſt improvements in the poem, as well as inſtances of the beſt ſort of Figures, ſuch as ſhew the paſſions of the mind in a ſtrong and lively manner. There are other which the poet makes uſe of, ſometimes to raiſe and diverſify his language; ſometimes to give ſtronger colours to the things he deſcribes; and ſometimes to engage, or poſſeſs his readers. I need not enter into a long inquiry concerning the more known figures of either kind; but ſhall touch upon one or two, which as yet have not been introduced by the criticks into their *ſyſtems*.

Poetical prophecy, is when we acquaint the reader before-hand of ſome events, which will

(r) *Od.* 17, 55,---44.

happen

happen in the progreſs of the poem: *Prevention* is when we ſpeak of ſuch things, yet to come, as if they were already preſent. *Prevention* gives an uncommon greatneſs and energy to the language: it places diſtant actions full before our eyes, and carries a certain boldneſs and aſſurance with it, that is very becoming. The *other* is of great ſtrength in poſſeſſing and captivating the reader; we love to look on into futurity: thus it flatters the powers and capacity of our own minds, at the ſame time that it gives an air of ſuperior knowledge and authority to the Poet.

From the invocation of the Muſe in the entrance to his poem, the poet has a right of propheſying; and it might be partly from this, that the name of *Prophet* and *Poet* has, in ſome languages, been uſed in common. But tho' he may and does propheſy in perſon, things of this nature are uſually introduc'd from others: as from ſuperior beings; from prieſts and augurs; from (*s*) perſons in the other ſtate; or juſt at the (*t*) point of departing from this. This latter method perhaps may carry the greater ſanction with it; but the other is the more poetical.

Some of the ſtrongeſt ſpeeches in Homer and Virgil are delivered after this manner, by men of the prophetick character. It is to this Figure (if you will give me leave to call it ſo) that the ſixth Book of the Æneid, and the fourth

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(*s*) As Tireſias in the 11th Odyſſey; or Anchiſes in the 6th Æneid.

(*t*) See *Il.* π'. Ver. 844 and 852. *Æn.* 10, 739.

of

of the Odyſſey, owe the greateſt ſhare of their beauty. Even the frightful raptures of Theoclymenus, and the Harpye of Virgil, engage the reader with a ſort of pleaſing terror. There is ſomething horribly delightful in theſe lines:

Floating in gore, portentous to ſurvey!
In each diſcolour'd vaſe the viands lay:
Then down each cheek the tears ſpontaneous flow,
And ſudden ſighs precede approaching woe.
In viſion rapt, the (*u*) Hypereſian ſeer
Up-roſe, and thus divin'd the vengeance near:
O race to death devote! with Stygian ſhade
Each deſtin'd peer impending fates invade:
With tears your wan diſtorted cheeks are drown'd,
With ſanguine drops the walls are ruby'd round:
Thick ſwarms the ſpacious hall with howling ghoſts
To people Orcus, and the burning coaſts!
Nor gives the ſun his golden orb to roll,
(*x*) But univerſal night uſurps the pole!

I beg pardon (ſays Antiphaus) but the ſpeech of Theoclymenus is a particular favourite of mine: and now you repeat it in Engliſh, I ſeem to want ſomething of that ſtrong pleaſure it uſed to afford me, where the Greek ſpeaks (*y*) *Of the ſun being periſh'd out of heaven, and of darkneſs ruſhing over the earth.* I cannot expreſs

(*u*) Theoclymenus.
(*x*) *Od.* 20, 430,—357.
(*y*) —— - —— Ἠέλιος δὲ
Οὐρανῦ ἐξαπόλωλε, νὺξ δ' ἐπιδδραμεν ἀχλύς.

the

the fulneſs of the words—but you know the original; and, I fear, will never ſee a tranſlation equal it. This whole prophetical viſion of the fall of the ſuitors, is the *true ſublime*; and, in particular, gives us an higher *Orientaliſm* than we meet with in any other part of Homer's writings. You will pardon me a new word, where we have no old one to my purpoſe: You know what I mean, that *Eaſtern way of expreſſing revolutions in government, by a confuſion or extinction of light in the heavens.* It is this manner of expreſſion which works up that ſpeech the neareſt of any to thoſe noble paſſages in holy Scripture; (z) "*I will ſhew* "*wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood* "*and fire, and pillars of ſmoak; the ſun ſhall* "*be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into* "*blood.*——(a) *I will cauſe the ſun to go down* "*at noon, and I will darken the earth in the* "*clear day*—(b) *All the bright lights of hea-*"*ven will I make dark over thee, and ſet dark-*"*neſs upon thy land.*"

I have often wonder'd, Philypſus, at ſome particular perſons, who are ever raviſh'd with any thing of the ſublime in common authors, and yet ſeem to have no taſte for the fineſt touches of this kind, thoſe which are ſo frequent in our ſacred writings. With what greatneſs and ſublimity do they abound? Such as might perſuade, that we are not only bleſt with

(z) *Joel* ii. 31.
(a) *Amos* viii. 9.
(b) *Ezek.* xxxii. 8.

inſtructions,

inſtructions, but favour'd too with a *languag* from heaven. Thoſe ſacred pages want onl to be read with a common regard, that all me might acknowledge them to contain the great eſt maſter-pieces of eloquence. Yes, Philypſus is there that eloquence ſits beſide the throne of truth, in all her nobleſt attire, and with a loo that ſtrikes us at once with reverence and de light. I long to expatiate on ſo glorious a ſub ject; but perhaps we may find a time of join ing together in ſome view of this nature. Ther has been a very good *(c)* example ſet th world this laſt ſummer; and if ever we ſhoul follow it, and enter thoroughly into this ſort o criticiſm, I dare ſay it will make any oth kind look poor and inſipid, when compare with it.——But at preſent we are in anoth ſphere; and I have already interrupted you to much.—

Philypſus, deſirous as he was to launch im mediately into thoſe noble depths of eloquence complied for the preſent, and returned to th point in hand: "My laſt inſtance from th "Odyſſey prevents what I had deſign'd for th "next: you ſee, it ſpeaks all along of futur "things, as if they were actually preſent. Theoclymenus has the whole fact paſſing ſuc ceſſively before his eyes: the deſtruction o the ſuitors is pictured in his mind; he ſees the *blood* ſprinkled upon the walls; their *bodies* floa ing in gore, and their *ſouls* ſinking to the re gions of the dead.

(c) *Blackwall's* ſacred claſſicks.

No

Now I am upon this head of *Prophecy*, and *Prevention*, I ſhould be very defective, were I to omit the other branch of it; which takes in all caſes where the poet forewarns us of events in his own proper perſon. This is to be found in the very ſame point, the fate of the ſuitors; but it is not delivered with the ſame air of enthuſiaſm: the *Poet* is informed by the Muſe of things to come, while the *Prophet* is poſſeſs'd by viſion; the knowledge of one is from inſtruction; of the other, from a ſort of frantick poſſeſſion of mind. The poet therefore anticipates events with leſs emotions of language; and ſeldom riſes into any fervor above what we meet with in theſe paſſages:

———Incens'd they ſpoke,
While each to chance aſcrib'd the wond'rous ſtroke;
Blind as they were—For death ev'n now invades
(d)His deſtin'd prey, and wraps them all in ſhades.

And before:

———In his ſoul fond joys ariſe,
And his proud hopes already win the prize.
To ſpeed the flying ſhaft thro' ev'ry ring,
Wretch! is not thine: the arrows of the king
(e)Shall end thoſe hopes, and fate is on the wing.

You obſerve, Antiphaus, that this event, which is ſo often anticipated by the poet, is the

(d) *Od.* 22, 38,---33.
(e) *Od.* 21, 104,---98.

great

great point on which the completion of his fable turns: and I believe you may have obſerv'd, that Virgil puts on the prophetick air (*f*) exactly in the ſame caſe. Virgil oftentimes improves upon his maſter: the circumſtance that introduces that paſſage in the Æneid, and the greater diſtance of time, give it a much finer and a nobler air than we find in Homer himſelf.

Theſe figures (for ſo I beg leave to call all unuſual manners of ſpeech) are of more difficult obſervation, as they lie out of the common road: I am afraid of wandering too far; and ſhall therefore return very readily to the more beaten path.

All paſſions warm the imagination, and make its images more ſtrong and ſenſible. It is this, in my opinion, that might render Metaphors very proper in the pathetick: though you and I, perhaps, ſhould not agree intirely on that head.

At leaſt this is certain, that they ſtrengthen and enliven the narrative part of poetry, beyond any other method whatever; when the poet treats of the moſt common things, he does not treat of them in the common manner:

Fame ſpeaks the Trojans bold, they boaſt the ſkill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
To dart the ſpear, and guide the ruſhing car,
With dreadful inroad thro' the walks of war.

(*f*) See *Æn.* 10, 501.

Strip

(g) Strip theſe lines of the metaphor, and they loſe their greateſt force and beauty. To ſay barely (as it is in the Greek) *that the Trojans are good warriors, that they launch the ſpear, and handle the bow well; that they manage their horſes dextrouſly; and in general, that they are very ſtrong and ſucceſsful in battle:* this declares the whole of the thing; but with ſubmiſſion, 'tis more like a proſe than a poetical narration; at leaſt, when compar'd with the ſame ſentiments in thoſe lines I have juſt repeated.

There are many innovations of this kind, which make the Engliſh Homer appear with advantage: a naked relation of fact is enough for hiſtory; but poetry requires ſomething more than bare truth: it has a thouſand ways of raiſing and beautifying its ſubject: Phœbus, like the luminary over which he preſides, does not only ſhew, but ſets a luſtre too, on every thing he touches: the poet is not ſo much to declare events, as to give its colours and life to every action: in doing this, nothing is ſo requiſite as ſtrong animated figures; as of all figures the metaphor affords the moſt ſenſible ſtrokes, and comes neareſt to the pencil.

Even in common caſes they are not without their beauty; thus in that interview between Ulyſſes and Laertes:

Beneath a neigb'ring tree, the chief divine
Gaz'd o'er his fire, retracing every line,

(g) *Od.* 18, 308,—263.

The ruins of himſelf! now worn away
(*b*) With age, yet ſtill majeſtick in decay.

Thus Agamemnon (after all his dangers, murdered by the hands of villains in his own kingdom) is not ſaid barely *to die*, but to *end*

(*i*) ——*the ſad ev'ning of a ſtormy life.*

When this figure expreſſes ſome ſtrange particularity, or includes any magnifying compariſon, one ſingle word is very powerful in raiſing the narration, and enlarging our ideas up to the occaſion:

With dreadful ſhouts Ulyſſes *pour'd* along,
(*k*) Swift as an eagle, as an eagle ſtrong.—

Now by the ſword, and now the jav'lin fall,
(*l*) The rebel race, and death had *ſwallow'd* all, &c.

I know no caſe, in which metaphors of a bold ſound are more proper, than in arrogant ſpeeches: when men defy the gods, or quarrel with the diſpenſations of providence. Philætius in the Odyſſey is no arrogant character; yet in one place (upon conſidering the afflictions of his prince, whoſe piety and virtue he was ſo well aſſur'd of) he falls into a rant againſt pro-

(*b*) *Od.* 24, 272,—232.
(*i*) *Od.* 4, 116,—91.
(*k*) *Od.* 24. 622,—537.
(*l*) *Od.* 24, 612,—527

vidence

vidence; in which the language is as lively and vigorous, as the ſentiment is ill-grounded and abſurd:

O Jove! for ever deaf to human cries;
The tyrant, not the father of the skies!
Unpiteous of the race thy will began;
The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,
With penury, contempt, repulſe, and care,
(m) The gauling load of life is doom'd to bear.

Theſe metaphors (which are of that kind, we may call *the audacious*) come very near the ſpirit of Oldham and Dryden; who undoubtedly, in their ſatirical works, flaſh out into the greateſt boldneſſes this way of any of our writers: indeed, in both, there are ſome which may come too near to prophaneneſs; but we muſt always take care not to attribute to the poet, what he ſpeaks under ſome other perſon. A devil is no longer a devil, unleſs he be haughty, impenitent, and blaſphemings; and Dryden is no more to be condemned than Milton, for making ſuch impious ſpirits ſpeak according to their true character.

What you aſſert, I take to be perfectly true, ſays Antiphaus; but were I bleſt with any genius for poetry, I own that a ſhocking impiety ſhould be one of the laſt things I would *chuſe* to deſcribe. And where it is choſen, there is room to be moderate, without injuring the

(m) *Od.* 20, 256, —204.

character with too great a ſhew of goodneſs: We ſee that Milton is not ſo groſs as Dryden; nor *(n)* Virgil ſo blunt as Homer.

Well, ſays Philypſus, there are other points which you might chuſe, and which ſerve as well for this ſort of metaphor: thus all pious frauds, infamous prieſts, or any prevailing ſuperſtition. Here the figure retains much of the audacious air, without any thing of impiety in it. Agamemnon indeed goes too far in the Iliad, where he ſeems to neglect Apollo as well as his prieſt:

Hence, with thy laurel crown, and golden rod;
Nor truſt too far thoſe enſigns of thy god:
(o) Mine is thy daughter, prieſt——

Here is ſomething of irreverence to the god, and an evident injuſtice to man: and the poet very prudently condemns the ſpeech, before he delivers it in his poem. But there is no ſuch

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(*n*) Virgil ſeldom deſcends to particulars: he chuſes rather to ſay in general, *Atque deos, atque aſtra vocat crudelia mater.* Even his Mezentius is more reſerved than Homer's Deiſts: He rather ridicules than affronts; *Aſt de me divum pater atque hominum rex viderit.*—Afterwards he grows a little warmer, and more metaphorical;

Dextra mihi deus, & telum quod miſſile libro,
Nunc adſint ——————

Where he ſpeaks plaineſt of all, Virgil touches upon his miſerable fate in the very next line:

Nec mortem horremus, nec divûm parcimus ulli:
Deſine. Jam venio moriturus. —— *Æn.* 10.

(*o*) *Il.* 1, 39,—29.

mark

mark ſet on one of Hector's; nor does it at all infringe that hero's character, which is remarkably pious all through the poem: he is ſpeaking againſt a very popular ſuperſtition, the trade of augury:

Ye vagrants of the ſky! your wings extend
Or where the ſuns ariſe, or where deſcend;
To right, to left, unheeded, take your way,
While I the dictates of high heav'n obey.
Without a ſign his ſword the brave man draws,
(p) And aſks no omen but his country's cauſe.

This has the *audacious* air, becauſe it ſpeaks contemptuouſly of a practice, which was vulgarly looked upon as religious and ſacred; and is *juſt*, becauſe it ſhews at the ſame time the greateſt reverence to the gods: he obeys the dictates of *heaven*, but he contemns the artifices of *the prieſt*.

Whatever reſtraints this kind of metaphor may deſerve, there is another ſort, which has always been received with the greateſt liberty. The *animating* metaphor, though the (q) moſt ſublime, and the moſt daring of any, except what was laſt mentioned, is very common, and that even in the chaſteſt poets, and in the ſofteſt pieces. It is this by which we give action and ſpirit to things that are ſtill and inſenſible. This

(p) *Il.* 12. 284,—243.

(q) Præcipué ex his oritur mira ſublimitas, quæ *audaciæ proxima* periculo tranſlationis attollitur: tolluntur quum rebus ſenſu carentibus actum quendam & animos damus. Quintil. lib. 8. cap. 6. Ariſtotle and Phalereus ſay exactly the ſame. See the latter, Περὶ Ἑρμ. Πά.

will raiſe the meaneſt points in the world: it may treat meer *names*, as if they were *things*; and things ſtill and inanimate, as if they had thought and action. What might ſeem the moſt ſurpriſing is, that this method of raiſing things above their nature has nothing of ridiculous in it. We eaſily perceive this to be true: but I own, for my part, I ſhould have been at a loſs for the reaſon of it, had not I met with a (r) fine obſervation in Mr. Pope's appendix to this work. I wonder now why I cou'd not before perceive, that *ridicule is more confined to moral agents, and obtains only where choice and Freedom is directly concerned.* That this is the caſe, is the more plain, becauſe even among moral agents, the very ſame thing, which, if brought on by our own folly, is a certain ſubject for ridicule; when it proceeds from ſome inevitable misfortune (or neceſſity) is the fartheſt from being ridiculous.

I am pleaſed to ſee, that this figure ſtands on ſuch good reaſon; for it is the very life and ſoul of deſcription. And might it not be of larger uſe, Antiphaus, than has commonly been obſerved? It is chiefly mention'd indeed of enlivening things inaminate; whereas poſſibly it may hold through the whole chain of beings in the world, as they riſe gradually above one another. Thus, when we attribute any thing of abſolute perfection to the higheſt orders of created beings; any thing which we think angelical to man, or any thing like humanity or

(r) *Od.* Vol. 5. p. 238.

virtue

virtue to beaſts, it might as well be included in this branch of metaphor, as when we give the powers of motion to things ſtill; or paſſions to things inanimate.

Nay, it may even return from the lower to the higher, when the ſpecies of a lower rank, upon the whole, has any (*s*) particular excellence which the higher wants; or partake of any (*t*) excellence which is common to them both, in a greater and more excellent degree.

But it muſt be obſerved, that where this figure in its higher notion, is applied to intelligents, it muſt not be done with the ſame indifference; or rather it requires the ſtricteſt caution.

The poet is at liberty to attribute action and paſſions to any part whatever of the mute creation: he may make the woods, or any ſuch inſenſible, ſympathize with his grief, with the ſame freedom as any inferior animals: we find it thus uſed particularly in all the *paſtoral* writers, whether ancient or modern. Every beaſt may have the compaſſion of a man; but few men can ſuſtain the properties of an angel: nothing would make a common mortal ſo mean and ridiculous as ſuch an elevation. The ſame holds in the higher intelligents: the firſt of the angelic order looks monſtruouſly ridiculous (as well as monſtruouſly impious) when he would

(*s*) As when we amplify the ſwiftneſs of an hero, by comparing it to the flight of an eagle: or

(*t*) The ſwiftneſs of an eagle, by comparing it to the ſwiftneſs of the winds.

imagine an equality where there was immutable diſproportion.

However, in ſome caſes, the property of an angel may be given to a man. The heathen poets compare the greater heroes to their gods: and when the chriſtian poet extols any ſuperior genius, any character that has ſomething in it above the common race of mortals, he may well draw ſome expreſſions from the order of beings next above the human. Had not Mr. Addiſon thought this juſtifiable, we ſhould have loſt one of the fineſt amplifications imaginable.

(*u*) So, when an angel, by divine command,
With riſing tempeſts ſhakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia paſt,
Calm and ſerene he drives the furious blaſt;
And pleas'd th' almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the ſtorm.

But whither am I wandering, my Antiphaus? You will think ſuch flights as theſe too airy; ſurely I am got into the wilds of criticiſm!—I don't know what the world might think of you at preſent, ſays Antiphaus: but if ever Mr. Dryden's ſcheme ſhou'd take place, and the poetical characters of angels be generally eſtabliſhed; what you may think the wildeſt of your flights now, might then be of good ſervice this way in poetry.—Be that as it will, ſays Philypſus, I believe I had better draw in my thoughts a

(*u*) See Addiſon's works, Vol. 1. p. 78. 12*mo*.

little

little for the preſent, and keep to things that are more obvious and ſecure. All agree, that the giving *thought* to things *inſenſible*, and human paſſion to the *brute* part of the creation, is equally juſt and beautiful: and at the ſame time nothing is of greater efficacy in rendering our ſentiments rais'd and poetical. That *the ſufferings of our fellow-creatures affect our ſouls by a natural ſympathy*, is a very good moral ſentence: but the poet is to elevate this effect of miſery: he inveſts her with a ſort of new *being*, and then gives her addreſs and *action*. In poetry our tears (*x*) *ſpeak*; our misfortunes are (*y*) *eloquent*; and *miſery appears* (*z*) *in perſon to plead for the diſtreſs'd*.

When more uncommon things are tranſferr'd this way, the metaphor may be ſafer, if it has ſome grounds in the fact, though it will bear very often without it. 'Tis allowable to repreſent the ſea, as flying back and aſtoniſh'd at the *terrible* (*a*) *voice of the* Cyclops: but 'tis more cloſe to attribute this fear and flight to it, when its waves are (*b*) *drove aſunder by the ſame Cyclops flinging a rock into the midſt of it*.

Another thing, which made this figure the ſtronger among the ancients, was their notion of *genii* or *preſiding deities*. In particular there was ſcarce a river or brook amongſt them, but what had its *genius*; and in ſpeaking of theſe

(*x*) *Od.* 10, 291,—248.
(*y*) *Od.* 6, 374,—311.
(*z*) *Od.* 6, 204,—169.
(*a*) As *Æn.* 3, 672.
(*b*) *Od.* 9, 581,—495.

the poets carry this metaphor farther than in any other caſe whatever. What an appearance does Xanthus and Simois make in the *battle of rivers*, which takes up the 21ſt Iliad? What a bold draught is that of the Nile in the ſea-fight at Actium, by (*c*) Virgil? And how much more ſublime than either, is even our tranſlation of the ſacred writings, where it makes *the deep* (*d*) *utter his voice, and lift up his hands on high?*

You may perceive I am run into another figure; but it is of a kind ſo nearly allied to the *animating metaphor*, that one often finds ſome difficulty in diſtinguiſhing the one from the other. Indeed when any of theſe *perſonages* are introduced diſtinctly in full ſtate, then it is ſomething beyond metaphor; but in ſhort ſketches, it may paſs very well under that figure. There is nothing but a ſtronger name adapted to the thing than its ſtrictly proper acceptation affords. I think, for inſtance, that we need not ſeek for a new figure in this paſſage:

Aw'd by the prince ſo haughty, brave and young,
(*e*) *Rage gnaw'd* the lip, *Amazement chain'd* the tongue.

Or for this:

In ev'ry ſorrowing ſoul I pour'd delight,
(*f*) And *Poverty ſtood ſmiling* in my ſight.

(*c*) *Æn.* 8. 712.
(*d*) *Habakkuk* iii. 10.
(*e*) *Od.* 20, 335,—268.
(*f*) *Od.* 17, 506,—421.

In the cloſe of this poem, the narration is elevated by a ſucceſſive chain of theſe *metaphors* or *fictions*, call them which you will. When the Ithacenſians are rang'd in arms againſt their prince, 'tis not ſaid, that they *ſhall die*, but that *(g) death attends them in the field.*—To expreſs Ulyſſes's aptneſs to forgive them; *(h) oblivion is ready to ſtretch her wings over their offences.*—As when they are ſhockt with their crime, and fling down their arms, there is this voice from heaven to effect it:

" Forbear ye nations! your mad hands forbear
"*(i)* From mutual ſlaughter. *Peace deſcends to ſpare.*"

Theſe, Antiphaus, are the moſt remarkable things I have taken notice of, as to the figures. I could have produc'd a greater number of excellent lines from this tranſlation, had not I endeavoured chiefly to give ſuch inſtances as contained, at the ſame time, ſome peculiar improvements in them: you would be ſurprized to ſee how many beauties they have, that are wanting in the original.

Surely they who are the moſt rigid for cloſe-tranſlating, will allow ſuch beautiful variations as theſe; which, without loſing the ſentiments of the original, only ſet a finer turn upon them. Let them call them, if they pleaſe, glorious offences, or beautiful wandrings from the letter:

(g) *Od.* 24, 540,—470.
(h) *Od.* 24, 558,—484.
(i) *Od.* 24, 618,—534.

theſe

theſe are ſuch offence as one would wiſh to ſee more frequent than they are, and of which the beſt tranſlators are the moſt guilty.

For my part I am particularly pleaſed, when I ſee a tranſlator reflect new light upon his original: wherever this is done juſtly, it does not alter the objects; it only makes them more bright and viſible.

I believe, Antiphaus, you will not diſapprove of ſome other methods, uſed in the Engliſh Odyſſey for this purpoſe, which I am juſt going to lay before you. Sometimes the language is rais'd and ſtrengthen'd; ſometimes the order tranſpos'd to advantage; in ſeveral caſes we have Homer's thoughts inſpirited by collateral thoughts from other authors: ſome little things are omitted, and ſome ſhort ſtrokes added, to correct the ſentiment, or to heighten the colours in the original.

Before you enter upon thoſe points, ſays Antiphaus, give me leave to mention ſome few things, which look like blemiſhes, under the ſubject you have juſt concluded.

It is allow'd, that metaphors are the moſt uſeful of figures to raiſe the poetical ſtile, to give the colour to our deſcriptions, and a juſt ſwelling and relief to our images; 'tis allow'd that a tranſlator may add theſe colours, where the original is leſs lively and expreſſive, than the ſubject may very well bear. The faults then muſt lie, either in the exceſs, or impropriety of ſuch additions. Some things will not bear a ſtrong light, and others require to be flung into the ſhades.

Where there is no occaſion for figures, they are at beſt only ſo many unneceſſary *ornaments:* I cannot ſee why a quiver full of arrows, ſhould be call'd (*k*) *a ſtore of flying fates*; why a fire ſhould be term'd (*l*) *a burning bed*; or a libation (*m*) *The ſable wave of offer'd wine.*

'Tis not the diſproportion of the metaphor to the thing, which might render theſe expreſſions blameable: if any thing, 'tis the want of occaſion. When the poet is to aggrandize ſmall ſubjects, we can bear with much bolder metaphors than theſe: though it may not be proper to call a ſtream of wine, by the title of a *ſable wave*, on common occaſions; yet when the work requires heightening, we may go ſo much farther, as to call a (*n*) *ſmall rivulet by the name of the ocean.*

If we judge by *occaſion*, there can be but few liberties for metaphor in common converſation; I mean, the common converſation of poetry. Not that they are to be baniſh'd thence entirely; rather it will require them frequently: but it requires only ſuch as are ſingle, and not far remov'd from the ſubject. When a perſon is ſpeaking to Penelope, in commendation of Ithaca, he might be allow'd to ſay, that *its ſoil* is rich; *that it* abounds *in corn*; *and that its trees are* laden *with fruit.* Homer's expreſſions ſcarce carry this ſo far; and yet I ſhould think them preferable to theſe in the tranſlation:

(*k*) *Od.* 22, 136,—119.
(*l*) *Od.* 9. 449—378.
(*m*) *Od.* 14, 499,-- 447.
(*n*) As does Virgil, Georg. 4, 23.

(*o*) In

(o) In wavy gold thy ſummer vales are dreſs'd;
Thy autumns bend, with copious fruits oppreſs'd.

Where the original ſays, that Eurynomus *was among the ſuitors of Penelope*, does it not ſeem better, as well as plainer, than this tranſlation?

——To climb with haughty fires
(p) The royal bed, Eurynomus aſpires.

A metaphor may be continued too far, as well as carried too high: a long chain of them leads us away from the proper ſenſe; and flings that into allegory, which we intend for *reality ſtrongly expreſs'd*. This is very common, eſpecially in our pindarick writers: indeed moſt of our poets have (q) faln into it ſometime or other; but in thoſe you find the moſt groſs and inſufferable inſtances of it that can be imagined.

In theſe *ſtrings* of metaphor, nothing in my opinion is ſo faulty, as that point which has been ſo often touch'd upon: the ſhifting of circumſtances in the ſame deſcription; and repreſenting a thing confuſedly, ſometimes in its figurative, and ſometimes in its *proper* appearance. While an actor is upon the ſtage, his own private character muſt be wholly

(o) *Od.* 19, 131,——112. See V. 565. ib. 482.
(p) *Od.* 2, 28,—21.
(q) See *Od.* 19, 286,—251. And 20, verſe 19, to verſe 30,—13, to 23.

laid

laid aſide: he muſt be entirely Booth, or entirely Cato. Nay, even in the ſcenary itſelf, things muſt be of a piece; and Mr. Addiſon has the juſteſt occaſion for his frequent ſeverities upon this (r) contradictory mixture's prevailing ſo monſtrouſly in our theatre: how would the wits of king Charles's time have laugh'd to ſee Nicolini ſailing in an open boat, upon a ſea of paſt-board? What a field of raillery would they have been let into, had they been entertain'd with painted dragons ſpitting wild-fire; enchanted chariots drawn by Flanders mares, and *real caſcades* and *artificial landſkips?* The making things after this manner, partly real, and partly imaginary, is to join inconſiſtencies. Shadows ought never to be mixt with realities in the ſame piece, whether in poetick ſcenary, or that of the ſtage.

A poet is never more apt to fall into this confuſion, than when he is ſpeaking of allegorical perſons; as, particularly, the deities of the heathens. When we ſpeak of them perſonally, we are apt to mix ſomething of their myſtick character: this is certainly vicious in writing; and 'tis more ſo, to confuſe the properties of thoſe things, over which any of thoſe deities were ſuppos'd to preſide, with the perſonal acts of any particular deity.

The poets are allow'd the privilege of elevating every ſubject they take into their management: if they pleaſe they may repreſent the ſun, as guided by an intelligence: and 'tis but one

(r) See Spectator, Numb. 5.

ſtep

ſtep farther with them, to give that guiding intelligence, a name; they call him Phœbus; and obviouſly enough, feign to themſelves, that he drives round the world in a chariot of fire. By degrees the allegory is form'd regularly, and enlarg'd with more particulars: he has ſo many horſes aſſign'd to his chariot: his own appearance is well known: beardleſs and young; a glory round his head, and a quiver full of arrows o'er his ſhoulder: Thetis is ready to receive him at the end of his journey; and when he is to ſet out again, Aurora riſes from the ocean to open the *gates of heaven*, that are kept for him by the *Hours*.

How very regular can fiction be upon occaſion? The eſtabliſhment of this allegory under theſe particulars, has prevented a world of confuſion: this we may ſee by an allegory, which is not yet ſettled on ſo uniform a plan. To ſhew how far, I ſhall beg leave to enlarge a little on one of the ſame nature, that of Aurora, the goddeſs of the morning.

Phœbus is never repreſented on this occaſion, but in his chariot I was ſpeaking of; as for Aurora, I know not whether ſhe rides, ſits, or walks: ſometimes ſhe is in heaven, and ſometimes upon earth: in ſhort, the poets ſeem to leave it undetermin'd how, when, or for what time ſhe makes her appearance. I have laid together ſeveral paſſages relating to this, but they leave the point as confus'd as it was before:

Now did the roſy-finger'd morn ariſe,
(s) And ſhed her ſacred light along the ſkies:

(s) *Od.* 13, 22,—18.

There

There, ſhe is plainly in heaven.

——When o'er the Eaſtern lawn,
In ſaffron robes, the daughter of the dawn
(t) Advanc'd her roſy ſteps——

And here as plainly upon earth.

—With her orient wheels
(u) Aurora flam'd above the Eaſtern hills.

Here I cannot abſolutely determine, whether ſhe be in heaven, or upon earth; but 'tis plain, ſhe is got into her chariot now, as ſhe was pleas'd to walk the time before.

But when 'tis evident, that ſhe is not upon earth, 'tis ſtill difficult to know whether ſhe is near it, or in the higher heavens: whether ſhe

———Aſcends the court of Jove,
(x) Lifts up her light, and opens day above:

Or only

(y)——Heaves her orient head above the waves.

There is the ſame difference in the degrees of that brightneſs, which is attributed to her appearance: ſometimes ſhe only (z) *bluſhes with new-*

(t) *Od.* 4, 587,—431
(u) *Od.* 16, 380,—368.
(x) *Il.* 2, 60,—49.
(y) *Il.* 19, 1.
(z) *Il.* 11, 1.

born

born day, and ſometimes ſhe is encompaſs'd with *(a) the full ſplendor of it*: when I read one deſcription, I take it for granted, that the glory round her head ſhould be of *a (b) glimmering light*; but when we come to another, 'tis of *a ſtrong (c) flame*: you are at the ſame loſs to know, whether her *robes* are *(d) roſe colour'd, ſaffron*, or *(e) purple*: in fine, it would puzzle the criticks to anſwer directly, whether ſhe has a *quiver* on her ſhoulders; and whether ſhe is to appear in a *(f)* martial, or in a gentle, peaceable poſture.

This unſettledneſs in the preſent caſe, runs through almoſt all the poets ſince Homer. The moſt correct that ever wrote are not entirely free from it. Virgil himſelf oftentimes *(g)* continues her courſe ſo far, that his *(h)* commentators, to ſalve the matter, ſay, we muſt underſtand Phœbus by Aurora. In him the very *horſes* that draw her chariot, are *(i) roſe-colour'd*, as in Theocritus they are *(k) white*: ſometimes ſhe has the *(l)* horſes of Phœbus; ſometimes *(m)* four

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(*a*) *Il.* 8, 83,—66.
(*b*) *Od.* 9, 515,—437.
(*c*) *Od.* 16, 381,—368.
(*d*) *Od.* 4, 587,—431.
(*e*) *Od.* 19, 500,—428.
(*f*) Compare *Od.* 19, 500, with 6, 58.
(*g*) *Æn.* 6, 536, &c.
(*h*) Thus Donatus, Ruæus, &c.
(*i*) *Æn.* 7, 26. and 6, 536.
(*k*)—— Λεύκιππος ἀνατρέχει ἐς Διός ἀώς. *Idyl.* 13.
(*l*) Æn. 5, 105.
(*m*) *Æn.* 6, 536.

of

of her own; ſometimes *(n)* two; and ſometimes ſhe is forc'd to ride only, and that upon *(o)* the wings of Pegaſus.

It may be left to the poets themſelves to determine, whether this management be juſt towards perſons of their own making: I ſhall only ſay, that the greateſt criticks have ever thought, that *conſiſtency* is requir'd in the moſt *unbounded fictions:* and, if I miſtake not greatly, Homer is more regular in this very fiction before us. A perſon better vers'd in his writings, than I have the happineſs to be, might, I believe, form from them as ſettled a ſcheme in relation to this goddeſs, as has been drawn up for any other of his deities. This is certain, that he has preciſely fixt the *time* of her appearance; 'tis that *(p)* interval, which commences after the firſt dawn of light, and ends juſt before the actual riſing of the ſun. She always aſcends *(q)* from the ſea to the Eaſtern *extremity*, or (as it is in the language of poetry) the *(r) gates of heaven:* there ſhe ſits in her *(s)* golden chariot, which has two horſes aſſign'd to it, diſtinct *(t)* from thoſe of Phœbus; and only waits to *(u)* prepare the way for the chariot of that deity.

(n) *Æn.* 7, 26.

(o) Κραιποινς ὑπέρ ποτᾶτο Πηγάσου πτεροῖς. *Lycophron.*

(p) The twighlight is reckon'd into the night. *Iliad* ή, 433. And the firſt *direct* appearance of rays attributed to the ſun. *ibid.* 422.

(q) *Il.* τ', 2.

(r) See Mr. Pope's note on *Il.* 5, 928.

(s) *Od.* ψ', 244.

(t) See note on *Od.* 23, 260.

(u) Φόως ἐρέουσα. *Il.* β', 49, &c.

The

The dreſs, and the epithets, which Homer gives to this imaginary being, are, as they ought to be in all ſuch allegories, *at the ſame time evidently (x) drawn from the nature of the thing, and fairly applicable to the fictious perſon.*

So much for allegory: 'tis a dangerous topick, and we are apt to be loſt in the clouds of it: either the natural deſcription, or the allegory by itſelf, may have a thouſand beauties; but when they are daſh'd together, every thing is dark and confus'd. They put me in mind, Philypſus, of the two liquors ſir Iſaac Newton ſpeaks of, which from a fine azure, and a beautiful red, if you mix them, produce no colour at all: the tranſparency and glow, which each had ſeparately, is immediately loſt; and their beauties vaniſh away into one thick impenetrable ſhade.

Before theſe confus'd allegories, and mixt metaphors, I ſhould have mention'd ſome other inſtances, in which ſingle metaphors are faulty, either as they are improper or affected.

Is it proper to ſpeak of Penelope's *wit and beauty* (or her beauty alone) under the notion of (y) *drooping verdure?* Is it proper to talk of (z) *raining kiſſes?* or of (a) *ſtoring a veſſel with* proſperous gales?

(x) This Euſtathius ſhews, at large, in his firſt note on the ſecond book of the Odyſſey: particularly, as to the epithet ῥοδοδάκτυλος.

(y) *Od.* 19, 149,—128.

(z) *Od.* 17, 49,—39.

(a) *Od.* 5, 213, and 216,—167.

Is

Is not the metaphor, and the turn of expreſſion, ſomewhat affected, or over-wrought, in this paſſage of the nineteenth Odyſſey?

Theſe ſwarthy arms among the covert ſtores
Are ſeemlier hid; my thoughtleſs youth they blame,
(b) *Imbrown'd with vapour of the ſmouldring flame.*

And a little farther, in the ſame:

My woes awak'd will violate your ear;
And, to this gay cenſorious train, appear
(c) *A winy vapour melting in a tear.*

Again; upon Telemachus's return:

All crowded round the family appears,
With wild entrancement, and ecſtatick tears.
Swift from above deſcends the royal fair;
Her beauteous cheeks *the bluſh of Venus* wear,
(d) Chaſten'd with coy Diana's penſive air.

In the following lines ſhe hangs o'er him,

——---In his embracies *dies*;
(d) *Rains kiſſes on his neck, his face, his eyes.*

(b) *Od.* 19, 22, —— 18.
(c) *Od.* 19, 143, —— 122.
(d) *Od.* 17, 49, —— 38.

You

You have here (ſays Antiphaus) what has appear'd to me as blemiſhes in this poem, under theſe ſeveral heads I have endeavour'd, Philypſus, to read it with ſeverity: and when my regards for the author, or the influence which ſuch writers will always have over one's ſoul, began at any time to ſway my mind; I have call'd up all the ill-nature I am maſter of to my aſſiſtance; I'm fully ſenſible how difficult it is to keep the balance ſteady: ſometimes our admiration may warm us too much; and ſometimes a little malice may prevail. If any thing I have been ſaying ſeems diſcolour'd with this temper of mind, point out my faults to me, dear Philypſus; correct me like a friend; and ſhew that openneſs I have deſerv'd at your hands.

When I have time to conſider the notes I ſee you have taken down (anſwer'd Philypſus) and to compare ſome paſſages with the original, you ſhall know more of my mind; as yet I ſee no reaſon for your requeſt; but think you have dealt with that fairneſs which I ſo much admire in my Antiphaus.

In the mean time I have a word or two to add on thoſe other excellencies of this tranſlation, which I mention'd to you before.

That method of improving the original, by *transferring beauties* from one fine writer to another is carried on thro' this remaining part of the poem, in the ſame frequency, as it was us'd in the former volumes.

Theſe *foreign infuſions* of thought and language (to uſe the name which Mr. Addiſon has given them) are very diſcernible to any one of a tolerable taſte: 'tis true, they muſt have ſomething

of a

of a new air; but they ſtill retain a diſtinct reſemblance of the old, ſomething like that of the ſiſter Nereids in Ovid;

——Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diverſa tamen; qualem decet eſſe ſororum.

In pointing out theſe reſemblances to ſome people, I ſhou'd be apprehenſive, that they might think me taken up in an imaginary chace; but any one of much leſs diſcernment than Antiphaus, will perceive immediately, that this likeneſs is real, and deſign'd by the poet himſelf. There is an *(e)* eminent critick, who has wrote a whole treatiſe on this ſingle point, in praiſe of a *(f)* particular favourite of his: in the preſent caſe, Mr. Pope tells *(g)* us, "That he read "the ancients with this deſign; that he ſerves him-"ſelf of them as much as he can; and that they "have been his chief inſpirers in poetry." I believe the gentlemen, who are concern'd with him in this tranſlation, would give me leave to ſay the ſame of them: 'tis too evident to be denied: it appears both in their *(h)* obſervations, and in their excellent works.

(*e*) Caſaubon.
(*f*) Perſius.
(*g*) Preface to his works, fol. and pref. to the paſtorals, p. 10.
(*h*) See note on Odyſſey 11, 152——18, 207.

In

In theſe laſt volumes, how finely are (*i*) ſome thoughts wove into this tranſlation from the ſacred pages; from the Iliad, and Æneid; from Dryden, and Milton among ourſelves; and from ſeveral others, both ancient and modern?

The tranſlator is ſometimes as artful in adding, of himſelf, ſome ſhort ſtrokes to what Homer has ſaid. We meet with ſeveral of theſe little inſertions, which are very juſt and improving. I ſhall mention but one. As Mr. Addiſon (*k*) propoſes a correction of *paradiſe loſt*, by cutting off the two laſt lines; Mr. Pope Diproves this poem, by adding a line in the concluſion of it: this inſertion poſſibly is better choſe than that alteration ſo modeſtly propos'd by Mr. Addiſon. The reader, indeed, would willingly go off with ſome hopes and ſatisfaction, after the melancholy ſcene in Milton's laſt book: but it maybe ſaid that, conſidering the moral and chief deſign of that poem, terror is the laſt paſſion to be left upon the mind of the reader. On the contrary, the Odyſſey ought on all accounts to terminate *happily:* and Mr. Pope's addition, in the cloſe of it, is therefore an improvement, becauſe it

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(*i*) From Ss. book 16, 227. ibid. 420. B. 18, 158. B. 19, 99, &c.
Virgil, B. 15, 250. B. 16, 189. B. 17, 227. ——
Ibid. 523. B. 18, 121. B. 24, 131, &c. ——
Homer, B. 17, 613. B. 24, 513. ——
Milton, B. 19, 694. B. 20, 370. B. 24, 498, &c. ——
Dryden, B. 23, 312. B. 24, 309. ibid. 632. ——
(*k*) Spectator, Numb. 369.

for-

forwards the moral; it gives us a (*i*) fuller view and confirmation of the *happineſs* of Ulyſſes, and leaves it upon a firmer foundation.

In the beginning of the evening, Antiphaus, you were ſpeaking of the poets *tranſpoſing words* to advantage. I believe this may ſometimes be of greater uſe in altering the order of *ſentences*, or the ſucceſſion of ſome *incidents* in the poem; tho' I own, this muſt be attempted but rarely, and with the greateſt caution: difficult as it is, you will find a good inſtance of the former in one of the ſuitors ridiculing ſpeeches; and of the latter in Euryclea's tranſports.

Euryclea, you know, diſcovers Ulyſſes by a ſcar upon his leg, while ſhe is bathing him. The moment ſhe makes this diſcovery, ſhe drops the jar of water, and is ready to faint away with ſurprize and joy. Tho' theſe, in the nature of the caſe, muſt follow immediately upon one another, Homer has inſerted a long ſtory (how the ſcar was occaſion'd) *juſt after* the diſ-

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(*i*) So Pallas ſpoke: the mandate from above
The king obey'd. The virgin-ſeed of Jove
In Mentor's form confirm'd the full accord,
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

Homer himſelf does not end in ſo full and complete a manner: his laſt line does not reſt well; and Chapman ſeems reſolv'd to ſhew the infirmneſs of it, as much as he could poſſibly in his tranſlation, which breaks off in theſe lines,

——'Twixt both parts the ſeed of Jove,
Athenian Pallas, of all future love
A league compos'd; and for her form, took choice
Of Mentor's likeneſs, both in limb, and voice.

covery, and *before* thoſe paſſions, which are the immediate effect of it. Thus is a ſudden event *declar'd* fourſcore lines before it is *deſcrib'd*. —— A ſucceſſion of *time* taken up in the narration, contrary to the time of the fact.—— An *impetuous* paſſion kept in ſuſpenſe; in a word, two things inſeparable in their nature, are diſjointed in the deſcription. I know not whether I ſee this in a wrong light; but at preſent it puts me in mind of Mahomet's flinging his baſon down, travelling to heaven, ſeeing the lord knows what there, and returning again before the water is run out.

If I miſtake not, this impropriety is avoided very artfully. Euryclea is not made to diſcover this ſcar before that long digreſſion. *(k)* It is rather ſaid, (in the prophetic manner of the poets) that ſhe would ſoon diſcover it, than that ſhe has actually diſcover'd it. 'Tis after the digreſſion, that it is mention'd directly as fact: ſo that in the tranſlation, this fact is not disjointed from thoſe emotions which it immediately raiſes in Euryclea; we are not told fourſcore lines after the jar is flung down, that the water is *running* out of it.

If this be really the caſe, ſays Antiphaus, I think the alteration is much to be commended. But why may not Homer himſelf be underſtood to ſpeak in the prophetic manner too? for I ſuppoſe that ſingle point would ſalve all: you do not blame the digreſſion itſelf?

(k) Od. 19, 461. And 547—392, and 467.

No,

No, ſays Philypſus, 'tis not the digreſſion which I blame, but the point in which it is introduc'd; juſt between a fact, and what in nature muſt be immediately conſequent upon that fact. If, as you aſk, Homer ſpeaks at firſt, only in the prophetic manner, then it is all clear'd up: but I fear his expreſſions confine it directly to a thing *then done*, and cannot be taken in the prophetical way.

Philypſus was ſo engag'd to this moment, that he had not once obſerv'd how the day wore away: he was ſurpriz'd to find the night was juſt coming on. "Why did you ſuffer me (ſays "he to Antiphaus) to keep you here ſo long? "I did not imagine the night had been ſo near "us: you know I am an eternal talker.—— "However I ſee the coach is at the door; and "we may reach our lodgings, I believe, before "it is quite dark."

AN

ESSAY

ON

Mr. *Pope*'s ODYSSEY.

EVENING V.

BEFORE they parted the laſt evening, the two friends agreed, that their next meeting ſhou'd be in the ſame place; and as this was to be the laſt which they intended to ſet apart for this enquiry, they ſet out for Horatio's earlier than uſual. When they alighted, Philypſus ordered his ſervant before them to the *dome* of Apollo, with a book or two he had brought in the coach; whilſt he and Antiphaus walk'd on

gently to enjoy the freſhneſs of the air, and the beauties of the place. The ſun, (which now began to be in its decline) as it ſhot thro' the trees, made a thouſand wavering mixtures of light and ſhade: the birds on all ſides were anſwering one another in their little natural airs; every thing look'd freſh about them, and every thing was agreeable.

Delighted with ſo many calm undiſturb'd pleaſures, they wander'd on from one walk to another, and chatted, as they went, of a thouſand indifferent things. Among the reſt Philypſus fell into an account of the company he had to dine with him. You know Marforio, ſays he.—— *Perfectly well, anſwer'd Antiphaus.*——He was there too; and made it his buſineſs, as uſual, to contradict every thing that was offer'd againſt any of our celebrated poets.——*I am very glad, ſays Antiphaus, that I was not of the company; his way of arguing is too general to be anſwer'd, and too poſitive to be borne with.*—— Yes, ſays Philypſus, it was his old way. If one of the company blamed ſome particular *littleneſs* in Milton, he would immediately aſk him how he could blaſpheme ſuch a *ſublime* poet? And when another mention'd a groſs line from Addiſon's works; How abſurd is that, ſays he, to charge ſuch a thing on the chaſteſt and moſt *correct* compoſitions in the world?—— *Right! and I ſuppoſe the very next thing he muſt aſk was, How you cou'd diſlike ſuch glorious men as Addiſon and Milton.*—You have him exactly. It was in vain to tell him that you diſliked only *this line*, or *that thought:* he would have his way; and, I doubt not, but in his opinion

we

we are all a ſet of heretics, or at leaſt free-thinkers in poetry. What an egregious fault is it, Antiphaus, with ſome men, only to have one's eyes open?——*But there are times* (ſays Antiphaus, aſſuming as he ſpoke, the imperious air and manner of Marforio) *there are times ſure, when they had better be ſhut.*——And therefore I ſhould wink always.——*Not ſo neither! your betters may direct you what to look upon, and what not.*——That's a good thought, truly; 'tis great pity the legiſlature has not conſider'd of it. I ſhould be in love with an act of parliament about the *uſe of eyes.*——*Why where would be the great harm of the matter, if you were ordered to wink hard, or turn away from every diſagreeable object that offer'd itſelf?*——How may I behave, if the object be agreeable?——*Look as long as you pleaſe.*——And how, if there be a mixture of diſagreeable in it?——*You ſuppoſe then, that there may be ſomething diſagreeable in that which is beautiful?*——Really, Sir, that is my notion. Nay, I am apt to think farther, that there is nothing ſo beautiful as to be without defect, without ſome mixture of the diſagreeable. By your rule then, we muſt loſe the ſight of a thouſand fine objects. How can I look on that lady you were admiring ſo much the other day in the ring, without ſeeing that her hair is of a diſagreeable colour? or muſt I ſwear that her *eyebrows* are *black*, becauſe ſhe has a *fine ſhape?*——*That's over-ſtraining the matter: but I think you might paſs by ſuch a trifle, if it were only in complaiſance. Where there are ſuch exact features, ſo charming a complexion, and a make ſo delicate, 'tis barbarous not*

to let ſuch a ſmall affair, as the colour of an eye-brow, eſcape your obſervation. Depend upon it, I would not be ſo blind as to think the lady was diſagreeable on that account.——*But I cannot allow any thing diſagreeable about her.*—Where are your eyes then?——*I would not believe them.*——That's one way.——*Or what would you ſay to the new invention?*——What invention, I beſeech you?——*Only of a ſet of glaſſes, which ſhall make each favourite object appear exactly the ſame to every eye.*—And exactly beautiful?—*That too.*—An hopeful project, truly! Let but Marforio be the deſigner, and ſome things would appear all glaring and beautiful; while all the reſt, I ſuppoſe, only upon turning the tube, might be nothing but deformity.

In the midſt of this roving ſort of talk, they were got to the *dome*, before they thought of it: "Well, ſays Philypſus, (as he enter'd) till "I meet with the perſpectives you were talking "of, I ſhall not be aſham'd to confeſs, that I "find my eyes at preſent to be of a different "turn. I cannot help perceiving ſome little "blemiſhes in our moſt delightful poets, and "yet I am far from an inſenſible to their beauty: I view them with delight; I admire them "paſſionately: nay, I believe, I have all of "Marforio's love, except the blindneſs of it. "'Tis there that you have open'd my eyes, "Antiphaus: You have taught me to love not "only with paſſion, but with reaſon."——Rather ſay, (reply'd Antiphaus) that your own mind aſſerted its true prerogative, and roſe up to guide your paſſions to none but proper objects.

jects.—However that be, ſays Philypſus, I am ſenſible of an alteration for the better, and can now indulge a paſſion for any writer with the greater appetite, as I am perſuaded it gives the mind a ſufficient pleaſure, without making ſo great a fool of it. Do I not love this writer? added he, (taking up one of the pieces that lay before him) I read him with the ſame eagerneſs, and find new charms in him continually. Nay, I think my love of him more ſecure than ever: ſince I can ſuffer myſelf to ſee his faults; and by that means am ſatisfied that they can never be ſufficient in the leaſt to cloud his perfections.

I am entirely of your opinion, (ſays Antiphaus) and doubt not, but in our finiſhing this enquiry, we ſhall have the greater ſecurity in admiring him. I only ſpeak of ourſelves. There may be many other beauties, and other faults, viſible to men of better eyes: but we may ſafely fix our own ſentiments on what we have been able to diſcover ourſelves. I hope, we have endeavoured ſincerely to hold the balance ſteady; and when we have done what we can, we have done what we ought.

I wiſh you would have left that *ſentence* for me, ſays Philypſus; it would have ſerv'd admirably to introduce what I am to enter upon this evening.—It is at your ſervice, (ſays Antiphaus) and therefore I beg you would proceed.

Tho' I might begin very well with the *ſententious manner* in writing; my ſubject, ſays Philypſus, is ſo various, that I do not well know what I ought to chuſe firſt: the proſpect widens rather too much upon me; and indeed takes in

moſt of the faults and virtues of any poem. I own that, in general, the great and firſt excellence of a *poet*, is to be *natural*: but it will be allow'd me, that the chief and diſtinguiſhing beauty of an *epic* poem, as ſuch, is a true air of *greatneſs*, and a ſtile that carries *weight* and *emphaſis* with it: as the vice moſt oppoſite to it, is *trifling*, *vulgarity*, and *meanneſs*. I wiſh I may manage theſe points as fully, as I doubt not Antiphaus will diſplay the *natural* ſtrokes that are ſo frequent in the Odyſſey.

Sentences carry much efficacy with them in a poem; they are uſually of the preceptive kind; tho' they ſeem rather to inſinuate, than to command: as they are general truths and maxims of life, well adapted to ſome particular occaſion in the poem, they appear with authority; and contain the moſt uſeful inſtructions, without the ſtiffneſs and odium of perſonal advice.

'Tis a miſtake (to uſe a maxim of Lord *Shafteſbury*'s) *to think that no body knows how to take advice; the fault is, that few know how to give it.* To do this agreeably, and at the ſame time with weight, is the great art of ſentences in poetry.

Poetry, in its birth, was calculated for the ſervice of religion. The deſign of the *epic* muſe was to paint the ſucceſſes of virtue, or the puniſhment of vice. Hence the *tragic*, that followed the very ſame purpoſes; and afterward the old *comedy*, whoſe buſineſs lay in encouraging leſſer domeſtic virtues, and ridiculing the foibles of mankind. *Satire*, the offspring of both theſe, partakes of either kind; ſhe ſmiles in Horace, looks

looks ſevere in Perſius, and commanding in Juvenal. The ſatyriſt may uſe different methods, but whether he laſhes or ridicules, 'tis ſtill the *vicious* who are to ſuffer.

All the other ſpecies of poetry either fall in with theſe, or follow the ſame ends; ſuch as forget this, deſerve not the name of poets: they proſtitute the muſe, and whatever they produce muſt be of a baſtard kind.

Among many other excellencies, this ought particularly to be obſerv'd in honour of the true genuine poets of antiquity, that they ſeem to treat of morality even better than thoſe who profeſs'd that ſtudy. Were it not for the works of their poets, we might very well imagine, *benevolence*, for inſtance, that which gives its life and ſpirit to the whole family of virtues, was ſuppreſs'd to the laſt degree among the heathens. In reading their philoſophers, one is almoſt perſuaded that they teach revenge, and make it their buſineſs to limit and reſtrain that love which men have naturally to one another. In ſhort, he that wants to find the true philoſophy, muſt go to their poets. They break out into warmer notions, and more exalted leſſons of humanity. Among them the face of charity is leſs veil'd and clouded, and goodneſs appears with a countenance more generous and erect.

The Odyſſey, as a *moral poem*, exceeds all the writings of the ancients: it is perpetual in forming the manners, and inſtructing the mind: it ſets off the duties of life more fully, as well as more agreeably, than the *academy* or *Lyceum*. Horace, who was ſo well acquainted with the tenets

tenets of each of them, has given (*a*) Homer's poems the preference to both.

Surely, Antiphaus, men were more virtuous in the days of Homer, than they were in the time of Plato or Cicero; at leaſt, they were more charitable, and tender to ſtrangers. How elſe could the poet ſpeak in ſuch a ſpirit of goodneſs, whenever he touches upon this duty? Nothing is inculcated by him more frequently, and nothing with greater ſtrength and emphaſis.

Homer (in relation to *ſtrangers*) does not ſtint the charity of his countrymen to the common *uſe of fire and water*: he ſeems rather to proportion the *bounty* to the *want*;

'Tis ours the ſons of ſorrow to relieve,
(*b*) Chear the ſad heart, nor let affliction grieve.

He ſcarce looks upon this as *bounty*, he rather thinks it a *debt* owing to every one of the ſame nature with us:

'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe:
(*c*) 'Tis what the Gods require.

What is given to them (ſays he) is paid to, and will infallibly be rewarded by, the divine power:

(*a*)—Quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius ac melius Chryſippo & Crantore dicit. Lib. 1. Ep. 2.
(*b*) *Od.* 6, 245,—207.
(*c*) *Od.* 9, 321,—269.

By

By Jove the ſtranger and the poor are ſent;
(d) And what to *thoſe* we give, to Jove is lent.

As the neglect of this will be aveng'd by the ſame:

To Jove their cauſe, and their revenge belongs;
(e) He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.

I doubt not, but this notion of the gods wandering on earth in a diſguiſed manner, was a very common motive to charity in thoſe times: it is mention'd very ſtrongly in the original, in this place; and (f) afterwards, when Ulyſſes appears as a ſuppliant among the Phæacians.

Such high exalted thoughts of this duty have carried the poet ſo far as (g) to teach, "That "we ſhould not value any labour of our own "in aſſiſting others:" but as that is not deliver'd in the *ſententious manner*, I ſhould go out of my way to repeat it at preſent.

To us, who have always enjoy'd ſo clear and ſteady a light, in regard to every branch of this duty, theſe *ſentences* may appear common and obvious: but I imagine any one, who ſhould compare theſe paſſages, to the rules of benevolence in the philoſophical writings of the ancients; would upon ſuch a view allow them to contain thoughts highly noble and extenſive.

(d) *Od.* 6, 247,—208.
(e) *Od.* 9, 329,—271.
(f) *Od.* 7, 265,—199.
(g) See *Od.* 7, 256,—194.

I ſhall

I ſhall mention but one more, which, tho' it run thro' ſeveral lines, is but one entire *ſentence*. It contains a beautiful idea of charity in a heathen; and goes rather beyond the heathen principles.

Who calls, from diſtant nations to his own,
The poor, diſtinguiſh'd by their wants alone?
Round the whole world are ſought thoſe men divine,
Who public ſtructures raiſe, or who deſign;
Thoſe to whoſe eyes the gods their ways reveal,
Or bleſs with ſalutary arts to heal:
Theſe ſtates invite, and mighty kings admire,
Wide as the ſun diſplays his vital fire.
It is not ſo with want! how few that feed
(*b*) A wretch unhappy, merely for his need?

I ought not to diſſemble one thing; that the tranſlation is not to be truſted entirely in this argument: we find theſe paſſages improved in the handling; and thoſe lines, in which they reſemble our ſacred writings, may be drawn more ſtrongly. However, the original itſelf may give us a great deal of reaſon to ſuppoſe, either that Homer had borrowed ſome lights from thence; or that he could diſcern the light of nature more clearly, than any other of the heathen writers.

Before I compar'd paſſages, I muſt own to you, that I was in particular expectation of improvements from Mr. Pope under this article. A virtuous generous ſoul is certainly as neceſſary

(*b*) *Od.* 17, 471,—387.

to

to conſtitute a great poet, as a great orator: and in ſentiments like theſe, we may diſcover that temper of mind, which I dare ſay has contributed much towards making that gentleman ſo good a poet, as well as ſo good a friend.

There is one particular more, extremely frequent in Homer: it runs thro' all his works; and is ſcarce once omitted, where there is any occaſion for it. I believe your thoughts outrun me, and might prevent my ſaying, that I mean his reflections on the miſeries of this life. They are moſtly very emphatical; and lead to a very eaſy and uſeful inference.

—To his native land our charge reſign'd,
Heav'n is his life to come, and all the woes behind.
Then muſt he ſuffer what the fates ordain,
For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,
(i) And twins, ev'n from the birth, are miſery and man!

In another place we have the ſame thought as ſtrongly expreſs'd, though branch'd out into ſeveral other particulars: let us ſuppoſe Ulyſſes before us: a prince, great for the ages in which he liv'd, and greatly diſtreſs'd: how much does he ſpeak like one born to wiſdom, and long inſtructed by adverſity?

Of all that breathes, or grov'ling treads on earth,
Moſt vain is man! calamitous by birth.

(i) *Od.* 7, 264,—198.

To

To day with pow'r elate in ſtrength he blooms;
The haughty creature on that pow'r preſumes:
Anon, from heav'n, a ſad reverſe he feels;
Untaught to bear, 'gainſt heav'n the wretch rebels.
For man is changeful, as his bliſs or woe;
Too high, when proſp'rous; when diſtreſs'd, too low.
There was a day, when (with the ſcornful great)
I ſwell'd in pomp, and arrogance of ſtate;
Proud of the pow'r, that to high birth belongs;
And us'd that pow'r to juſtify my wrongs.
Then let not man be proud; but firm of mind,
Bear the beſt humbly, and the worſt reſign'd:
(k) Be dumb, when heav'n afflicts!———

Of all *ſentences*, there are none which ſtrike the mind more forcibly, than thoſe which carry a bold air, a certain nobleneſs of thought with them. There is a *moral heroiſm*, greatly to be preferr'd to that which generally uſurps its name; a generoſity of ſoul, that looks beyond the vulgar, and ſpeaks up to the truth of things: it is this generoſity, which animates thoſe lines in Virgil:

Eſt hic, eſt animus, lucis contemptor; & iſtum
(l) *Qui vita bene credat emi, quo tendis, honorem.*

The ſame ſpirit is infus'd into this line:

(m) Death, ill exchang'd for bondage, and for pain!

(k) *Od.* 18, 171,—141.
(l) *Æn.* 9, 206.
(m) *Od.* 17, 523,—441.

The

The nobleſt ſentiments are not ſuch as *glitter*, but ſuch as are *ſolidly generous and good.* We have frequent inſtances of both, from two perſons in the Iliad. Hector ſpeaks things, that are *great*; Ajax often, what is *marvellous* and *ſurprizing*: both ſpeak loftily: but one is more ſolid, and the other nearer to a rant; both ſhew courage and generoſity in what they ſay; but they ſeem to *talk*, as they *act*: Ajax fights merely for fighting ſake; while Hector engages always for the good of his country.

I ſhall beg leave to cloſe this head with two ſentiments, as much celebrated as any in the Iliad, and ſpoke by the two heroes we have been talking of. The one, in the mere ſpirit of an hero;

If Greece muſt periſh, we thy will obey,
(n) But let us periſh in the face of day.

The other, in that of a patriot, as well as an hero:

Without a ſign his ſword the brave man draws;
(o) And aſks no omen, but his country's cauſe.

I am ſorry, ſays Antiphaus, you have quitted this point ſo ſoon; methinks you might afford a little more room for a thing of ſuch conſiderable uſe. *Sentences* are fitted by their nature to carry on that chief deſign of poetry, to mix the *uſe-*

(n) See Note on *Il.* 17, 731,—647.
(o) *Il.* 12, 284,—243.

ful

ful with the *agreeable.*——Together with a certain air of authority, they ſerve to eſtabliſh the poet's moral character; which, according to a (*p*) late hypotheſis, may render him at the ſame time more *delightful*, as well as more *inſtructive.* ——Beſides this, they often flatter the vanity of the reader; and (as the (*q*) firſt of critics tells us) "take the more readily with this or that "perſon, as they confirm in general, what he "has before concluded from his own obſerva- "tion on particular occurrences in life."

I wonder at one thing (ſays Philypſus) that ſo many of the critics ſhould blame ſentences, and look upon them as particularly unfit for poems of the *epic* kind: (*r*) Rapin, I think, condemns them, as they ſeem to jut out of the ſtructure of the poem, and are apt to interrupt the narration too much: Boſſu, who is rather on their ſide, yet obſerves there is a kind of *calm wiſdom* in them, that is contrary to the *paſſions.* Even the perſon, whom you juſt now call'd the *firſt of critics*, puts us in mind of your ruſtics, that are always (*s*) ſtringing of proverbs together: and a very good critic of our own ſays, in ſo many words, that (*t*) *they are generally ſome of the heavieſt pieces in a whole poem.*

Let them add, if they pleaſe, ſays Antiphaus, that they ſound aukwardly from the mouth of a *young perſon*, and prepoſterouſly from an *atheiſt.*

(*p*) *Origin* of our ideas of *beauty* and *virtue.*
(*q*) See *Ariſt. Rhet.* Lib. 2. Cap. 21.
(*r*) See Note on *Od.* 7, 379.
(*s*) *Ariſt. Rhet.* Lib. 2. Cap. 21.
(*t*) *Addiſon's Miſc.* Vol. 1. p. 237. 12°.

I own

I own the charge: the beſt writers themſelves ſeem to be ſenſible of it; and where they do any thing of this kind, are the firſt to correct themſelves. Addiſon (*u*) puts a ſentence into the mouth of Portius; but he corrects him for it, in the next line, tho' the ſon of a Cato; and when Virgil (*x*) makes his atheiſt ſententious, there is ſtill a mixture of the atheiſt to be diſcovered in what he ſays.

But grant that ſentences are not proper from perſons that are young, or vicious; grant that they are not proper in a Mezentius, or a Portius: what then? may they not be proper in Cato himſelf, or in Æneas?

'Tis the ſame caſe in every particular you have produc'd from the critics: they ſpeak rather againſt the abuſe of this ornament, than againſt the ornament itſelf. There can be no doubt of it; *ſentences* are certainly faulty, when they appear too groſsly, and ſtand off from the reſt of the work: but what is this to ſentences, which are fitly applied, and wove in artfully with the other parts? Homer and Virgil are very happy in this particular: they give them a ſufficient fulneſs; but they ſeldom glare ſo, as to attract the eye ſingly to themſelves: you admire them as much from their relation to the things about them, as for their own particular beauty: in ſhort, they might be beautiful by themſelves,

(*u*) *Port.* 'Tis not in mortals to command ſucceſs;
But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll deſerve it.
Semp. Curſe on the ſtripling! how he apes his ſire!
Ambitiouſly ſententious. ——— ——Cato. Act 1. Sc. 2.

(*x*) *Æn.* 10, 860.

but

but they are much more ſo by their fitneſs to the places and occaſions on which they are us'd by thoſe great maſters of poetry.

We may add to this, that their ſentences are ſo far from hindering the narration, that they are almoſt conſtantly a part of it, and help to carry it forward: but tho' they are uſually wrought into the ſpeeches of the poem, we do not receive them from perſons improper, or hurried by any violent paſſion; and where the ſubject is ſtill and gentle, that *calm wiſdom*, that has been objected to them, cannot be very prejudicial. Indeed in any place, or on any occaſion, a long thread of them is inſupportable; theſe are worſe than the *Sanchoiſms* of Cervantes, becauſe they are not ſo ridiculous: we can laugh at Sancho all the time he is multiplying his proverbs upon us; but in poetry, ſuch dry preachments are, of all other, the greateſt opiates, and have the quickeſt effect on the audience. Lucan's poem, and Seneca's tragedies are, I fear, inſtances of this to a great degree.

There is another way of murdering ſentences, for which we are wholly oblig'd to thoſe ingenious gentlemen the *editors*. It is that art of cutting off ſentences from the body of a work, and forcing them *to jut out* from it, whether they will or no, by printing all ſuch, whereever they can catch them, in *italic characters*. Mr. Addiſon, if I remember, is condemning this practice in that very place where he ſays, that *ſentences are ſome of the heavieſt pieces* in a poem: and I imagine nothing could make him

ſpeak

ſpeak ſo ſeverely of them in general, but this practice, that is ſo deſtructive of their beauty.

In ſhort, ſentences that are cold, affected, or ill-placed, ſuch as are either too diſtinct, or too much throng'd, may be blam'd with a great deal of juſtice: but ſuch as are handſomely wove into the narration, at proper intervals, and from none but proper ſpeakers, will not only be ſafe from the cenſure of the critics; but are allowed by them in general, to be highly ſerviceable towards giving its proper weight and emphaſis to an *epic* poem.

I think you have defended this beauty ſufficiently, ſays Philypſus; and ſhall go on to the next under this head, *conciſeneſs*. There is no greater ſymptom of weakneſs in a writer, than his being apt to ſay *a little in a great deal*; as nothing is more ſtrong and emphatical, than to ſay *a great deal in a little*.

Hence the force and emphaſis of this line of Mr. *Pope*.

(y) Oh ev'ry ſacred name in one, my friend!

And of this,

(z) The great, the good: your father and your king.

The want of a ſcrupulous connexion, draws things into a leſſer compaſs; and adds the greater ſpirit and emotion:

(y) *Od.* 22, 226,—208.
(z) *Od.* 2, 54,—47.

(a) He

(a) He ſhrieks, he reels, he falls.——

The more rays are thus collected into a point, the more vigorous the flame: hence there is yet greater *emphaſis*, when the rout of an army is ſhewn in the ſame contracted manner; as that in the 24th of the (b) Odyſſey: which has ſome reſemblance to Salluſt's deſcription of the ſame thing (agreeable to his uſual conciſeneſs) in theſe four words only: (c) *ſequi, fugere, occidi, capi.*

There may be a contraction of many circumſtances to a point, which turns more on the *ſentiment*, than the *diction*: as when we place the ſucceſs of a thouſand important events on one effort, or one moment of time: thus Antinous, the chief of the ſuitors, to his companions,

(d) Ariſe, (or you for ever fall) ariſe.

Which has ſuch an air of Milton's Lucifer:

Awake, ariſe, or be for ever fall'n!

Thoſe lines, ſays Antiphaus, ſerve the purpoſe for which you repeat them very well; but is there not ſomething too much like a *turn* upon the words of them? I was ſenſible of that, (anſwer'd Philypſus) but I follow your example,

(a) *Od.* 18, 443,—397.
(b) V. 610.
(c) *Bel. Jug.* p. 106. Ed. *Mattaire.*
(d) *Od.* 24, 499,—436.

Antiphaus,

Antiphaus, in viewing a thing only in one light at a time, to prevent the infinite confuſion that would happen in turning each line every way. This is brought as emphatical: you allow it to be ſo; if it anſwers the end for which it is produced, that is all that I intend: and I beg once for all, to be underſtood under this view in every inſtance that I have, or may uſe, on particular occaſions.

This maſculine nervous conciſeneſs, I am ſpeaking of, is very uſual from generals to their ſoldiers: but among a multitude of inſtances, I am particularly pleas'd with that ſpeech of Henry the Great, before the battle in the plains of Ivry, "*I am your king, you are Frenchmen, and* "*there are the enemy.*"

Sometimes we find an emphaſis and vigour impreſs'd on every particular word of a ſentence:

(e) *Now, grief, thou all art mine!*

And in theſe lines, which we have often admir'd for their peculiar ſtrength and efficacy: they ſpeak of Ulyſſes's extreme love of his native country:

To ſee the *ſmoak* from his lov'd palace riſe,
While the dear iſle in *diſtant* proſpect lies,
(f) With what *contentment* would he *cloſe his eyes?*

(e) *Od.* 18, 299,—255.
(f) *Od.* 1, 77,—59.

This

This is not only of uſe in the grand or pathetic: there are excellent inſtances of it from Terence (*g*), in the tender and familiar, as there are others from Virgil in the natural, and even in the ſatirical; and that ſo ſtrongly in the latter, that (*h*) ſome have been apt to imagine from them, that Virgil might, if he pleas'd, have made the greateſt *ſatyriſt* that ever wrote.

Sometimes this very emphaſis is increas'd by a certain *oppoſition* of the words us'd in it: there is a paſſage in the Iliad, which I have particularly admir'd on this account: give me leave to repeat it from the original; becauſe the Greek tongue is particularly emphatical, and has more nerves than perhaps our language is capable of:

Οὐ γὰρ πῶ ἴδομεν, οὐδ' ἔκλυον ἀνδήσανΘ,
Ἀνδρ' ἕνα τοσσάδε μέρμερ' ἔν' ἤματι μητίσαΘ,
(*i*) Ὅσσ' Ἕκτωρ ἔρρεξε———

The emphatical manner in writing flies all dreſs and ornament, all ſuperfluous and deſcriptive epithets, all turns and elegancies of thought. Hence that conciſeneſs, which generally attends it. The moſt obvious fault in conciſeneſs is obſcurity; what is obſcure, can never be ſufficiently

(*g*) Hæc verba mehercule *una falſa lachrumula*, Quam, *oculos terendo miſere, vix vi expreſſerit, Reſtinguet.* ——— *Eun.* Act. 1. Sc. 1.

(*h*) Thus *Dryden*; from his

——— Non tu in *triviis, indocte, ſolebas Stridenti miſerum ſtipula diſperdere* carmen. Ecl. 3, 27.

As others from this line:

Qui Bavium *non odit, amet tua carmina*, Mævi. ib. 90.

(*i*) Ιλ. χ', 48. The *oppoſition* is carried on further in the next lines, between ἐν' ἤματι, and Δήθά τε καὶ δολιχόν.

emphatical

emphatical: this makes the conciſe way the moſt difficult of any. 'Tis eaſy to follow the ſtream of one's imagination, and write on with an unthinking rapidity; but to expreſs every thing fully, and to ſay nothing that is needleſs, requires a great judgment, and much force in our expreſſions. The great Monſieur Paſcal had a particular happineſs of comprizing *much* in a *few* words: he had a very mathematical turn of thought; and of all things hated an idle prolixity. You will be pleas'd with an excuſe of his in a certain caſe, where he had been guilty of it: 'tis in the cloſe of one of his letters, where he begs his friend to pardon the unuſual length of it, by ſaying, *That he really had not time to make it ſhorter.*

Some emphatical paſſages are not only ſo conciſe, as to contain juſt as *many ideas* as *words*; they have often force enough even to *intimate* ſeveral ideas more than they *expreſs.*

Thus it is in all intimations of power. One of Homer's greateſt excellencies lies in this. In ſetting off the hero of his Iliad, he does not ſay in words, that he was vaſtly terrible to the enemy; he mentions the effects, and leaves the reader to collect what terror muſt attend him. After the death of Patroclus, the whole army of the Trojans is put into confuſion, only (*k*) *at hearing his voice:* they are all trembling, and diſpirited: (*l*) *they had ſeen Achilles.* 'Tis not a ſudden panick; it continues upon them: when

(*k*) Ιλ. σ', 224.
(*l*) *ib.* σ', 248.

they pour'd down in ſuch numbers from the city, it was becauſe (*m*) *they did not behold the creſt of that hero*; and now they are all conſulting, whether they ſhould not quit the field, becauſe (*n*) *he had ſhewn himſelf at a diſtance, and might poſſibly enter into the next engagement.*

Homer has the ſame addreſs in intimating the power of his deities; when he introduces them as effecting their deſigns with a (*o*) *touch*, with a (*p*) *voice*, with a (*q*) *ſingle thought.*

It is the ſame ſentiment that gives their air of grandeur to theſe lines:

(*r*) Declare thy purpoſe; for thy will is fate,
Let all be peace.———He ſaid, and gave the nod
(*s*) That binds the fates, the ſanction of the god.

And this, of the ſame import, from our Shakeſpear;

———What he bids be done,
Is *finiſh'd* with his bidding.———

On this turns the greatneſs of that thought in the ſacred hiſtory of the creation: *God ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light.* Tho' I ſhould imagine this to exceed every inſtance

(*m*) Ιλ. π', 70.
(*n*) *ib.* σ', 262.
(*o*) *ib.* ν', 60, 75.
(*p*) *ib.* ξ', 150.
(*q*) *ib.* ο', 242.
(*r*) *Od.* 24, 547,—475.
(*s*) *Od.* 24, 561,—485.

above;

above; becauſe it *intimates* all that they *expreſs*, and intimates it as *fully* and *ſtrongly*, as they *expreſs* it.

Let the greatneſs of this ſentence ſtand or fall by the rules of ſublimity. We need not mention, that (*t*) Longinus choſe it for an inſtance of the *ſublime:* whether that great critick ever ſaw it or not, is not material: but I wonder, that ſome later writers, of very great name, cannot be perſuaded to ſee any force or energy in it. I own, I have never read what Monſieur Le Clerc offers againſt the ſublimity of this paſſage: ſurely it would not be very difficult to anſwer it, if it be of a ſtrain with what (*u*) Monſieur Huet offer'd before him; where he ſeems to argue, that (*x*) *this paſſage cannot be* ſublime, *becauſe the language is* ſimple.

It is this art of leaving more for the reader to collect, than you expreſs in words, which runs through ſeveral of Ulyſſes's ſpeeches, both at the court of Alcinous, and before the *ſuitors*. Whether the hero tells his own ſtory, or feigns ſome other, he is equally careful in laying before them ſomething of the high ſtation he once enjoy'd: and hence his ſpeeches have generally a great air of that celebrated anſwer of Marius to a meſſage ſent from the Roman general: (*y*) *Go, and tell Sextilius, that you ſaw Marius, ſitting among the ruins of Carthage.*

(*t*) Cap. 9. Ed. *Oxon.* 1718.
(*u*) See Preface to *Boileau*'s works.
(*x*) See *Huetii Dem. Ev.* Prop 4. Sect. 55.
(*y*) *Plutarch*'s life of *Marius.*

Intimation is ſo ſtrong and nervous, that the (z) ancient criticks confin'd the name of *emphaſis* to this one point; tho' (as we uſe the word) the very contrary of this may be of great ſervice in making a diſcourſe *emphatical*. The ſoul is ſometimes poſſeſs'd by the *number* of great circumſtances. Thus in that paſſage of Homer, which Mr. Pope tranſlates after the following manner:

Men, *ſteeds*, and *chariots* ſhake the trembling ground;
The *tumult* thickens, and the *ſkies* reſound:
Victors and *vanquiſh'd* join promiſcuous cries,
(a) Triumphant *ſhouts*, and dying groans ariſe.

We meet with the ſame *tumultuary figure* in the deſcription of the field after the battle:

(b) Thro' *duſt*, thro' *blood*, o'er *arms*, and hills of *ſlain*.

This paſſage (we are told) is imitated by *Xenophon*; and I am ſure the hiſtorian has not weaken'd it, by drawing it into a greater length, and expreſſing the circumſtances more fully: allow me the ſatisfaction of reading it to you. (c) *When the battle was over, one might behold thro' the whole extent of the field, the ground dy'd red with blood, the bodies of friends and enemies, ſtretch'd over each other, the ſhelds pierc'd, the ſpears broken, and the drawn ſwords, ſome ſcat-*

(z) See *Quintil. Inſtit.* lib. 8. cap. 3. and lib. 9. cap. 2.
(a) *Il.* 8, 80,—65.
(b) *Il.* 10, 356,—298.
(c) Note on *Il.* 10, 356.

ter'd

ter'd on the earth, ſome plung'd in the bodies of the ſlain, and ſome yet graſp'd in the hands of the ſoldiers.

Now we have faln upon an hiſtorian, give me leave to obſerve one thing; that, both with poets and in hiſtory, (*d*) *there may be ſome fraud, in ſaying only the bare truth.* In either, 'tis not ſufficient to tell us, that *ſuch a city*, for inſtance, *was taken and ravag'd with a great deal of inhumanity.* There is a *poetical falſity*, if a ſtrong idea of each particular be not imprinted on the mind; and an *hiſtorical*, if ſome things are paſſed over only with a general mark of infamy or diſlike. It was in (*e*) Quintilian I firſt met with this obſervation; and I wiſh our hiſtorians, of all parties, did not give us ſo many examples of it, as we find every-where in their works.

'Tis the ſame in poetry: when all the *circumſtances* are laid out in their proper colours, and make a complete piece; its images ſtrike us with greater energy, than when the *whole* of the thing is only mention'd in general. Thus the *diffuſed ſtyle* has its propriety under this head; and makes a larger and more continued impreſſion: as the force of its contrary excellence, a juſt and emphatical *conciſeneſs*, may be more collected, and pierce the deeper. I do not mean when we *mention* a thing, but when we *ſhew* it in a few words. There are juſt miniatures of great objects in poetry, as well as in

(*d*) Minus eſt totum dicere, quàm omnia.
(*e*) *Inſtit.* lib. 8. c. 3.

ſtatuary or painting. A Hercules (*f*) in little, may have all the nerves of a Coloſſus: and even that prodigious deſign of (*g*) Dinarchus might not have been more *gigantick*, than Timanthes's (*h*) Polyphemus. Noble images, whether in a larger or ſmaller compaſs, ſtrike the mind very ſtrongly. Either muſt be according to the occaſion. Things ſometimes demand to be drawn at full length; and the ſoul requires to expatiate over them: ſometimes they chuſe a more contracted ſpace: but though they loſe from their ſize, they loſe nothing of their ſpirit. It fills us with a noble and enlarg'd pleaſure, to conſider the heavenly bodies, their courſes, and their immenſe diſtances: at the ſame time, we are ſtruck with a very particular admiration, when we view their ſituation and motions in the *orrery*.

Any uncommon extenſive image cauſes an enlargement of our ideas, and poſſeſſes the mind more completely: in ſuch caſes 'tis obſervable, that even the turn of the verſe may aſſiſt theſe images. I may ſeem too particular, if I ſay, that *large* words, and lines which conſiſt chiefly of *long* ſyllables, may be of uſe to extend our thoughts in conceiving any gigantick form: and yet perhaps both will be found not unſerviceable in Mr. Pope's deſcription of his *Cyclops*.

(*f*) See *Statius*, Sylv. lib. 4. 6, 37.

(*g*) To form mount Athos into a ſtatue of Alexander the Great; ſo deſign'd, as to hold a city in one hand, and to have a river run thorough the other.

(*h*) His picture of that giant in miniature.

A giant-ſhepherd here his flock maintains;
Far from the reſt he ſolitary reigns,
In ſhelter thick of horrid ſhade reclin'd;
And gloomy miſchiefs labour in his mind.
(*i*) A form enormous!———

Or, where we ſee him

(*k*) Stretch'd forth in length, o'er half the cavern'd rock.

Or when

He ſends a dreadful groan; the rocks around,
(*l*) Thro' all their inmoſt, winding caves reſound.

Whether you think this length and heavineſs of the ſyllables neceſſary in the preſent caſe, or not; I am ſure, you will allow it to be ſo in melancholy images.

In thoſe deep ſolitudes, and awful cells,
Where *heav'nly-penſive contemplation* dwells,
And *ever-muſing melancholy* reigns;

as Mr. Pope begins his *Eloiſa* to *Abelard*; and there are ſeveral inſtances of the ſame kind afterwards, in the ſame poem.

Homer, in deſcribing a large object, makes uſe of a word, which of itſelf is (*m*) above have a

(*i*) *Od.* 9, 217.
(*k*) *Ibid.* 354.
(*l*) *Ibid.* 469.
(*m*) *Il.* 6, 676.

verſe: and Ovid, on a like occaſion, joins ſeveral together of an unuſual length. We behold his Ægeon beſtriding his whale, even in the turn (*n*) of the words which are to deſcribe him.

Delay and *repetition* are ſometimes proper for the ſame reaſons; there is a delay almoſt in every ſyllable, where Mr. Pope intimates the vaſt *ſize* of a ſtone, as well as the difficulty in *heaving* it up;

Then heav'd the goddeſs in her mighty hand
A ſtone, the limit of the neighb'ring land,
(*o*) There fixt from eldeſt times; black, craggy, vaſt.

Virgil adds a repetition in his imitation of this very paſſage in Homer: *Saxum circumſpicit ingens, Saxum antiquum, ingens.*—And Mr. Pope commends the beauty of this repetition, as (*p*) *it makes us dwell upon the image, and gives us leiſure to conſider the vaſtneſs of it.*

It may ſeem ſtrange, that the vaſtneſs, the *mere bulk* of an object, ſhould poſſeſs the mind in the manner I have been ſpeaking of: but tho' there is no real excellence in largeneſs, 'tis certain that we are apt to apprehend it as excellent. This puts me in mind of a point, that always ſtrikes me very much in poetry; a ſort of *comprehenſion*, as I ſhould chuſe to call it, for want of ſome better name. 'Tis when any great view

(*n*) ——Balænarumque prementem
Ægeona ſuis immania terga lacertis, *Met.* 2. 10.
(*o*) *Il.* 21, 470,—404.
(*p*) See note *ibid.*

is

is completely contracted into a few lines; but to come up perfectly to my notion, it ſhould be ſuch a view as is ſufficient to fill the whole mind: we are, in a manner, ſurrounded with it on all ſides; and which ever way we turn our eyes, we cannot look out of it. This is the caſe, where Ulyſſes is repreſented in his ſhipwreck on the coaſt of Phæacia;

Above, ſharp rocks forbid acceſs; *around*,
(q) Roar the wild waves; *beneath*, is ſea profound!

If you can fancy yourſelf in the place of Ulyſſes, at that juncture, you will apprehend what I mean the more fully. You can then ſee nothing, but what is painted out in this couplet.

I apprehend you, (ſays Antiphaus) and indeed have obſerv'd this beauty often in reading. There is a thought, (if I miſtake not) repeated twice in the eleventh Odyſſey, of this kind:

(r) Above, below, on earth, and in the ſky.

I know not whether the image be total, but it cannot want much of it, in that deſcription of a ſhipwreck'd perſon, juſt before the lines you repeated:

Amidſt the rocks he hears a hollow roar
Of murm'ring ſurges breaking on the ſhore;

(q) *Od.* 5, 529,—413.
(r) *Od.* 11, 139 and 373.

Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,
To ſhield the veſſel from the rolling ſea;
But cliffs, and ſhaggy ſhores, a dreadful ſight,
(s) All rough with rocks, with foamy billows white.

If this be not total, at leaſt it will engroſs two of your ſenſes, whilſt you keep in the ſame poſture; but thoſe, as you ſay, ſeem the moſt complete, which take up the eye what ever way you turn.——As this (reſum'd Philypſus) to keep to the ſame element:

(t) And all above was ſky, and ocean all around.

Theſe total views are much more vigorous and affecting, when the objects are not inanimate: or at leaſt, when ſome more moving conſiderations are annex'd to them. Thus in the picture of a rough ſea, terminating in craggy ſhores, and rocks, and a tempeſtuous ſky, every object has an additional terror from our ſeeing Ulyſſes painted in the midſt of theſe dangers, and ſtruggling to make ſo difficult a ſhore.—I remember a paſſage of this kind in a writer of a very ſtrong imagination, which is heighten'd by the ſame method. We have it in a deſcription of mount Atlas, tho' I believe the author took his ideas from the Alps: 'tis deliver'd in this bold poetical kind of proſe: (u) " *See, with what trembling*

(s) *Od.* 5, 521.
(t) *Od.* 12, 474.
(u) *Characteriſticks*, vol. 2. pag. 389.

" *ſteps*

" *ſteps poor mankind tread the narrow brink of*
" *the deep precipices! from whence with giddy*
" *horror they look down, miſtruſting even the*
" *ground which bears them; whilſt they hear the*
" *hollow ſound of torrents underneath, and ſee the*
" *ruin of the impending rock, with falling trees,*
" *which hang with their roots upwards, and*
" *ſeem to draw more ruin after them.——*"

In theſe caſes, our paſſions, as well as our ſenſes, are engag'd: and I take ſuch views to be then entirely complete, when all our paſſions, as well as all our ſenſes, may be engroſs'd by them. Were I to give an inſtance of ſuch a view, I ſhould prefer that paſſage in Virgil, where he places you in the midſt of a city, cover'd with the diſmal ſhades of night, taken and fir'd in a thouſand places by the enemy, and every-where fill'd with ruin, terror, and confuſion:

(x) ——————*Crudelis ubique*
Luctus, ubique pavor, & plurima mortis imago.

I have dwelt the longer on theſe *comprehenſive views*, as they fill and delight the mind very ſtrongly. There is another caſe, much of this nature, and of particular energy: I do not mean, when we *ſurround*, but when we carry the mind out to a vaſt *extent:* as in this ſentiment:

(y) By heav'n above, by hell beneath.

(x) *Æn.* 2, 369.
(y) *Od.* 23, 369.

There

There is a thought of this nature, very justly reckon'd among the Sublime, which appears with a perfect uniformity in (z) Virgil, in Homer, and in the book of *Wisdom*, formerly ascribed to Solomon. For my part, I do not at all wonder at this exact resemblance in them. It is such a thought, that when it is once set before one, it possesses the mind so strongly, that it will leave its image behind it: and indeed 'tis observable, that a great critick, where he would applaud it in Homer, (*a*) repeats it himself in the very turn of his own criticism. Longinus is the person I mean: who in a thousand instances, as well as this,

(*b*)—*Is himself the great sublime he draws.*

One of the most common topicks for this among the poets, is in speaking of the distance of Tartarus. Homer makes it as far from hell to earth downwards, as it is upwards from earth to heaven: it has been (*c*) observ'd, that two of the best poets since have enlarg'd it gradually, Virgil to twice, and Milton to thrice that depth: but, if I mistake not, Hesiod of old has carried the mind further than either of them: it would please you to see, how exact he is in his measures: (*d*)

(z) *Ingrediturque solo & caput inter nubila condit.* Æn. 4, 177.
Οὐρανῷ ἐςήριξε κάρη, καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὰ βαίνει. Ιλ. δ'.
Καὶ οὐρανοῦ μὲν ἥπτετο, βεβήκει δὲ ἐπὶ γῆς.
Lxx. per *Grabe.* Σοφ. Σολ. ιη', 16.

(*a*) Τὸ ἐπ' οὐρανὸν ἀπὸ γῆς διάςημα. De *Subl.* θ'. Edit. *Oxon.*
(*b*) Essay on *Criticism.*
(*c*) Note on *Il.* 8, 16.
(*d*) Θεογ. ver. 722.

"An

" An anvil (ſays he) will be nine days complete " in falling from heaven to our earth; and as " many in falling from our earth to Tartarus." ——This is the diſtance from us to the gates of Tartarus only: he afterwards carries the mind much farther, in this deſcription:

There lie the treaſures of the ſtormy deep,
Of earth, and water, and extended darkneſs.
A dreadful chaſm! ſqualid, and uninform'd,
And hateful ev'n to gods. Whoe'er, within
The dreadful op'ning of its gates, ſhould plunge
Prone thro' the great abyſs; twelve times the courſe
Of the pale moon, ſhould feel its ſtorm and tempeſt
In dire deſcent; ſtill hurry'd on precipitate,
Amidſt the various tumult and confuſion
Of diſagreeing natures. Oft the pow'rs
Immortal caſt their eyes upon theſe regions,
(e) And ſhudder at the ſight.——

This imagination ſeems to be imitated in Milton, where Satan meets with that violent ſhock, in travelling thro' Chaos; but the fall here ſtrikes us more, becauſe it has no bounds: it is ſtill continuing lower and lower; and the mind, in endeavouring to conceive it, is loſt in its *deſired infinitude*.

When our bodies are all ſo ſtraiten'd and confin'd, what muſt the ſoul be made of, Antiphaus? and what might be its powers, if unreſtrain'd? ſince even in ſuch dull company as the body,

(e) *Heſiod's* Θεογ. 744.

with

with all theſe weights and incumberments about it, it betrays on every the ſmalleſt occaſion ſuch an appetite to infinity?

Mr. Addiſon, in one of his fineſt works, the eſſay on the pleaſures of the imagination, reckons greatneſs as firſt among thoſe things, which give that (*f*) pleaſure: "Nothing (ſays he) (*g*) gra-"tifies *the mind* ſo much, as thoſe large grow-"ing ideas, which lead her on almoſt to an in-"finitude. (*h*) Our imagination loves to be "filled with an object, or to graſp at any thing "that is too big for its capacity: we are flung "into a pleaſing aſtoniſhment at ſuch unbound-"ed views, and feel a delightful ſtillneſs and "amazement in the ſoul, at the apprehenſions "of them."

Every one may know this pleaſure by experience: 'tis not a dry maxim laid down by the philoſophers: whoever will conſult his own mind, when he looks only on a proſpect, may ſay as much as Mr. Addiſon or Mr. Locke has ſaid on this occaſion. When I had the pleaſure of converſing with the gentleman who deſign'd theſe gardens, (as indeed the fineſt in the nation owe their beauty to his directions) I was very much pleas'd with a maxim which he then mention'd; "That as the greateſt *fault* in a pro-"ſpect was confinement; ſo the *meaneſt* thing "too in a deſign, was to have the bounds and "reſtraints of it immediately viſible."

(*f*) *Spectator*, Numb. 412.
(*g*) Numb. 420.
(*h*) Numb. 412.

There

There may be ſeveral other points to be conſider'd under the character of emphatical, whether from the *ſtrength* of the language, the *nobleneſs* of the ſentiment, or the *greatneſs* and *extent* of the object itſelf: but I am only giving a few ſketches of the kind: you will give me leave, in the ſame manner, to take a ſhort view of its contrary, the *low* or *mean ſtile*.

It has been ſaid, that (*i*) *lowneſs has juſt as many cauſes, as elevation; ſince whatever raiſes the ſentiment or diction has its oppoſite, which is mean.* This has the appearance of truth; but if one general meaſure muſt be given, I ſhould think that it is an exceſs either way, which cauſes meanneſs. Things over-wrought, as well as things under-wrought, will be mean.

When the leaſt object is expreſs'd in juſt and proper terms, it will not of itſelf come under the character of meanneſs: nay, ſmall things may be manag'd ſo as to change their nature, and to compoſe the *grand air*. We meet with diſſertations on the late diſcoveries in the leſſer world of animals, which have ſomething great and ſublime in them. Littleneſs itſelf may be aſſiſtant too in amplifying a ſubject. Homer uſes it thus in his character of Tydeus; and 'tis viſible to any one, that bold martial atchievements look greater in a NASSAU, than they would in a Maximin.

(*i*) Eadem fere eſt ratio minuendi: nam totidem ſunt deſcendentibus, quot aſcendentibus gradus. *Quintil. Inſtit.* Lib. 8. Cap. 4.

Such

Such conſiderations as theſe have induc'd me to imagine, that all meanneſs ariſes from ſome *diſproportion* or other. When a perſon is repreſented in a view beneath himſelf, or any action of force is expreſs'd weakly, the expreſſions fall ſhort of the nature of the thing: again, that meanneſs, which ariſes from the language, may have the ſame meaſure. The cloſe of a ſentence may fall beneath the expectance rais'd in the beginning of it, and then will neceſſarily have a mean air. Some ſorts of poetry are of a nobler kind; and deſcriptions of things, that would not be mean in a *ſonnet* or *ſatire*, may become ſo in *epick*. In general, all vulgar terms, and all very diſagreeable deſcriptions, are beneath the heroick ſtile: as all triflings, or any affectation of ornament, argue ſomething beneath the care of a poet, who has taken upon him to rule the nobler paſſions, and to ſing of heroes, and of gods.

When any thing has an epithet higher, than its own nature and the occaſion requires; or lower, than the proper idea of the thing might very well demand; 'tis much the ſame; in both there will be a diſproportion, and a meanneſs. Thus,

Be mindful of yourſelves, draw forth your ſwords,
(*k*) And to your ſhafts obtend theſe *ample boards*.

(*k*) *Od.* 22, 88,—75.

And

And this line,

(*l*) His ſhoulder-blade receiv'd th' *ungentle ſhock.*

The ſame critick, who obſerves on a certain writer, for ſaying, that ſome perſons who were ſhipwreck'd met with *an unpleaſant death*; is equally ſevere on thoſe, who carry things too far; he ranks any vain (*m*) *elevations*, and the *puerile ſtile*, under one and the ſame head.

Indeed both are frigid, and both are mean. A little or pretty thought dreſs'd up in grand words, is like the Cupid, in one of Coypel's pieces, who is crept into Mars's armour, and looks as if he was endeavouring to ſtrut about in it: whilſt a great thought in little words, puts one in mind of that tall gentleman we ſaw one night at the maſquerade, dreſſed like an infant; and dangling its hands, as if it were perfectly helpleſs.

A mixture of *mean* language with the *grand*, makes the meanneſs more viſible; as poſſibly in this line,

(*n*) Stript of his rags—*he blaz'd out like a god.*

Thus where a libation to the gods is called (*o*) *an holy beverage* in the Odyſſey; and Mars (*p*) the *heavenly homicide* in the Iliad.

(*l*) *Od.* 17, 549,—461.
(*m*) *Longinus*, Cap. 3.
(*n*) *Od.* 22, 2.
(*o*) *Od.* 3, 435,—339.
(*p*) *Il.* 21, 471.

There

There ſeems to me to be ſomething too mean for the idea we form of a giant, in this expreſſion;

(q) Her * huſband *ſcowr'd away* ———

And juſt after;

The men like fiſh, they ſtuck upon the flood,
(r) And cram'd their filthy throats with human food.

In the ſame manner we hear of Ulyſſes's companions, being (s) *daſh'd like dogs* by the Cyclops.

I doubt not this was expreſs'd thus, to give us the larger idea of that *monſter:* but might not it have been expreſs'd ſo, as to ſerve that purpoſe, without giving us at the ſame time too low an idea of the *men?*

The dignity of the perſon will make any mean language appear yet meaner. Whether we conſider Ulyſſes as (t) *ſo great an hero*, or as *the* (u) *godlike gueſt* of Alcinous, this couplet ſounds beneath his character:

(x) ——— Shrunk with pining faſt,
My craving bowels ſtill require repaſt.

(q) *Od.* 10, 131,—115.
* *Antiphates.*
(r) *Od.* 10, 144,—124.
(s) *Od.* 23, 337,—313.
(t) *Od.* 7, 228.
(u) *Od.* 7, 193.
(x) *Od.* 7, 296,—215.

Nothing

Nothing can be more juſt than Horace's obſervation, (y) *That a king in exile or diſtreſs, muſt lay aſide that air of grandeur, and thoſe ſwelling words, which might become him in his power:* yet muſt he remember, that he has been a king: there's a greatneſs even in diſtreſs; and a due medium between words *of a foot-and-a-half long*, and *monoſyllables*. Be that as it will, there is certainly much reaſon, that he ſhould reaſſume his ſtyle with his dignity: and (whatever may be ſaid for that ſpeech of Ulyſſes in his wanderings) after he is reinſtated, he ought certainly to ſpeak like a monarch. I am afraid he fails in this reſpect, in the following lines:

Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
To throng my empty'd folds with gifts or ſpoils;
But now I haſte to bleſs Laertes' eyes
(z) With ſight of his Ulyſſes, ere he dies.

When the god of the ocean ſees Ulyſſes eſcap'd from his dominion, he is ſo much provoked, that he flies immediately to the throne of Jupiter, to lay his complaints before the father of the *gods*: let us hear part of his ſpeech on this grand occaſion:

Againſt *yon deſtin'd head* in vain *I ſwore*,
And menac'd vengeance, ere he reach'd the ſhore;
(a) Behold him landed—*careleſs and aſleep*.

(y) *De Arte Poet.* ver. 96.
(z) *Od.* 23, 387,—360.
(a) *Od.* 13, 156—135.

When

When an expectation is rais'd by the preceding verſes, and little or nothing follows upon this expectation;——we need not quote (*b*) Horace to prove that it will be *mean*; every one will ſee it; and every one may ſee, that it ariſes from the diſproportion.

I have often obſerv'd, how fatal this particular is to that ſort of people, who are known by the characters of *ſtory-tellers*. The greateſt baulks theſe gentlemen meet with, are occaſion'd by their beſpeaking attention too much; and after all, ending in ſome inconſiderable circumſtance. There is a certain paſſage in the Odyſſey, which puts me in mind of this diſtaſter ſo common to them:

Prepare then, ſaid Telemachus, to know
(*c*) *A tale*, from falſhood free, not free from woe.

What follows upon this? *No earthly thing, i'gad*, as Mr. Bays has it; only that he is *the ſon of Ulyſſes*, and that he is ſearching *after the king his father*.

There is another (*d*) inſtance of this nature, in that important dialogue between Neptune and Jupiter, juſt mention'd.

Of this kind alſo is a certain figure, which Mr. Addiſon (*e*) calls an *anti-climax*: a downfal in the cloſe, where a paſſage has been very promiſing in the beginning. I remember he

(*b*) *De Arte Poet.* ver. 139.
(*c*) *Od.* 15, 295,—270.
(*d*) See *Od.* 13, 164, to 172,—140, to 147.
(*e*) *Miſc.* Vol. 2. p. 300. 12°.

quotes

quotes a *(f)* French couplet upon that occaſion, which I ſuppoſe might be deſign'd for ridicule; but there are many inſtances, from more ſerious writers.

I beg leave to mention one thing, ſays Antiphaus.——What you have been ſaying, may afford the reaſon, why that ſpecies of criticiſm, which goes upon ridicule (in the *manner* of the *Hind* and *Panther)* is not to be depended upon: the beſt lines that ever were wrote, may be rendered ridiculous, only by raiſing too great an expectation in the reader, juſt before they are introduc'd in the criticiſm.

There is another kind of littleneſs (proceeded Philypſus) when the language does not become the poetick ſtyle; all *proſaick poetry*, or (as Dr. Garth us'd to call it) *a diction loitering into proſe*, carries ſomething of meanneſs with it; ſomething below the harmony, the emotion, the majeſty, that is requir'd from the *epick* muſe.——Here are two or three couplets which I think deſcend too near to proſe;

And now Telemachus, the firſt of all,
(g) Obſerv'd Emmæus entring in the hall.

——Let Eurymachus receive my gueſt,
(h) Of nature courteous, and by far the beſt.

(f) Allez vous, luy dit-il, ſans bruit chez vos parens,
Ou vous avez laiſſé votre honneur, & *vos gans.* ib.
(g) *Od.* 17, 400,—328.
(h) *Od.* 15, 560,—517.

His

His food an herald bore; and now they fed,
(i) And now the rage of craving hunger fled:

It might be thought too trifling to obſerve, that this meanneſs is often owing to an ill-judged uſe of monoſyllables. (k) A long run of theſe little *pigmy* words, beſide an unavoidable air of meanneſs, often makes a line rough and hobbling; and almoſt ever keeps it from being firm and compact.

'Tis very rare, that you meet with a Latin verſe terminating in a ſingle monoſyllable; and ſometimes, where we do meet with it, 'tis evidently (l) deſign'd to aſſiſt in expreſſing the littleneſs or ridiculouſneſs of the ſubject.

Unleſs it be thus deſign'd, or be ſignificant, a verſe (even an *hemiſtick*) may be render'd mean, merely by conſiſting of theſe little words. I know there are entire lines of them that are tolerable, nay, that run with ſome degree of vigour; as this in the Odyſſey,

(m) Ere yet he loos'd the rage of war on Troy.

And that *cloſe* in Shakeſpear,

Cry'd havock; and *let ſlip the dogs of war.*

(i) *Od.* 8, 68,—69.
(k) From *Voſſius* de Carm. Cantu, p. 45.
(l) As in Horace's Art of Poetry, ver. 139, and Virgil's 1 Georg. ver. 181.
(m) *Od.* 8, 78.

The

The ſentiments here are ſo great, that they take us off from obſerving the littleneſs, which the diction might otherwiſe occaſion: yet, to ſpeak my mind, I believe that theſe very thoughts would appear more majeſtically in large adequate expreſſions.

Beſide this littleneſs from the nature of words, there is oftentimes a meanneſs annex'd in our thoughts to ſuch particular words and phraſes. All mere *vulgar* ways of ſpeaking are mean in poetry.——The muſe ſhould reject any low *proverbs*, and the language of the croud.——Even the *ideas* of things, in which they particularly are employ'd, are ſullied and debas'd.—I believe I may add, that whatever has an air of *burleſque*, or has been mark'd for ridiculous on any other occaſion, will be apt to retain ſomething of the *mean*, where-ever it is us'd.

His ſhoulder-blade receiv'd th' ungentle ſhock;
He ſtood, and mov'd not, like a marble rock,
(n) But ſhook his thoughtful head.———

I doubt not, I have formerly met with ſomething in *burleſque*, to which this paſſage has a diſtant reſemblance: tho' the thing itſelf be gone out of my head, the diſtaſte to ſuch a particular expreſſion ſtill remains with me. 'Tis true, this would not juſtify a criticiſm; and yet it leads one unavoidably to diſlike the paſſage.——This ſort of *acquir'd meanneſs* may be ſometimes more general: as where Menelaus calls Telemachus

(n) *Od.* 17, 550,—463.

(o) *the*

(o) *the mirror of conſtant faith.* This expreſſion has been ſo often us'd in a ridiculous ſort of writings, that it will ſound meanly to the generality of thoſe that hear it.

A ſtar-light ev'ning, and a morning fair.——

——Is a line in Dryden's Virgil, (p) condemn'd by a very exact critick, upon account of its being low and mean. 'Tis of the acquir'd kind. Any one, who has been at all converſant with the poetry of a belman, will certainly look upon it with ſomething of contempt: yet is there nothing mean in it of itſelf, and a critick in France might think it a good handſome line. But the beſt expreſſions degenerate, when uſed by the populace, and applied to low things: the uſe they make of them, infects them with a low abject air.

Thus *proverbial* ſpeeches, and all other expreſſions very common among us, become unworthy of our *epick* poetry. Foreign proverbs are often great and emphatical to us; as many of ours may ſound great to foreigners; yet at home, both, if vulgar, will be apt to appear mean, or at leaſt, unfit for the greater kinds of poetry. One inſtance, or two, will be ſufficient: in the *tenth* Odyſſey we have this line;

(q) With *broken hearts* my ſad companions ſtood.

(o) *Od.* 4, 227.
(p) *Eſſay* on *Georg.* 1. Pref. p. 8.
(q) V. 227.

And

And this in the *twenty-ſecond*,

(r) ——*Dogs, ye have had your day.*——

I ſhall not preſume to ſay, how far the Odyſſey or Iliad might be blameable for any of theſe meanneſſes in the days of Homer himſelf: it is the privilege of every dead language, to be entirely free from them at preſent. We hear not the proverbs, nor know the current ridicule of thoſe times. His language is ſafe enough from the vulgar now: and as to any words that might have been vulgar enough then to ſeem low, we are in an entire ignorance even which they are. This is a conſiderable advantage which the ancients have over every living writer; and for which, by the way, there ſhould be ſome allowance made in any compariſon between an ancient and a modern.

Thus any meanneſs that is *acquir'd*, may be *loſt again*, or *worn off* by time and accidents. It is not ſo with meanneſs in the things themſelves. They have ſomething ſettled in them; and are deliver'd down to us through the ſtream of ages, unalter'd and the ſame. Perhaps, if we would take off the veil, which ſuperſtition has flung over the worſhippers of Homer, we might diſcern ſome traces of this in the converſation of the *ſuitors*; in the *ſcene* at Eumæus's lodge; and in Sicily, when we are with the *Cyclops*. 'Tis true, the Odyſſey is built upon an humbler plan;

(r) V. 41,—35.

Homer ſuits himſelf to his deſign: and it may be very juſtly ſaid (with Mr. Pope) *(s) That where this poem cannot ſupport a ſublimity, it always preſerves a dignity, or at leaſt a propriety.* If theſe points may fail in *dignity*, they have always *ſome propriety* in the poem; either from the ſpeaker, or the audience, or the occaſion.

To return to the tranſlation: every idea that has ſomething aukward in it, has ſomething mean and ridiculous. The firſt laugh in the Iliad is occaſion'd by the aukward behaviour, and odd addreſs of Vulcan; as the only laugh in the Æneid is rais'd on the untoward figure, which Menœtes makes in that poem.

There ſeems to me to be ſomething mean and aukward in this image:

His *looſe head* tott'ring, as with wine oppreſs'd,
(*t*) Obliquely drops, and *nodding knocks* his breaſt.

Perhaps the *ſneezing-piece* in the *ſeventeenth* book *(u)* borders too much on the ſame fault; or, if it be no fault, on the ſame diſagreeableneſs.

For the ſame reaſon, all deſcriptions that have any thing of the nauſeous in them, might be avoided in poetry, or at leaſt they ſhould be but ſlightly touch'd in it: I cannot think 'tis any particular niceneſs or effeminacy in my temper, which inclines me to wiſh, that the co-

(*s*) *Od.* Vol. 5. p. 237. 12°.
(*t*) *Od.* 18, 282,—239.
(*u*) Ver. 625, —541.

lours had not been laid on ſo ſtrongly on ſome (x) occaſions. The worſt image I know of this kind is in the deſcription of the *drunken Cyclops*: and what is ſurprizing to me, the very ſame groſſneſs, on the ſame occaſion, is kept up in (y) ſeveral of the beſt poets that ever wrote.—— Here you will forgive me, if I am ready to ſink under authority, in a point where my very ſenſes almoſt contradict it. But when ſuch great names, as Homer, Virgil, Pope, and Addiſon may be produced to defend one and the ſame deſcription, what are we to think, Antiphaus? can we ſay a thing is not offenſive, when we feel the contrary? or muſt we allow, that nature ought to be juſtly and fully expreſs'd, even in the moſt nauſeous of ſubjects?

It cannot be deny'd, (anſwer'd Antiphaus, after having turn'd the queſtion for ſome time in his mind) every deſcription that is juſt, is *poetically good*; but then I fancy, 'tis as true, that a deſcription poetically good, may be the more improper to be inſerted, on that very account. This will be readily allow'd in all caſes of obſcenity: the *beſt deſcription* in ſuch points is certainly the moſt *improper*; and ſurely the ſame will hold in a great meaſure of any images directly nauſeous. We have, you ſay, the examples of the greateſt poets that ever wrote, againſt us: but if the reaſon of the thing be againſt them, no authority whatever, nor any

(x) See *Od.* 4, 543, and 548,—10, 285, &c.
(y) *Od.* 9, 443,—373. *Æn.* 3, 632. *Addiſon's Miſc.* Vol. 1. pag. 61. 12°.

number of examples, can be of the leaſt real weight. I am delighted with the correctneſs of a Virgil, or an Addiſon; I admire Pope, and reverence Homer. But were there any one piece of obſcenity repeated in the works of all theſe great men, would ſuch a deſcription alter its nature, and become amiable? 'Tis the ſame in other caſes, as well as in obſcenities: all things, that have ſomething in their nature diſagreeable, will ſtill be diſagreeable, where-ever we find 'em.

The line you hint at in the *drunken Cyclops* cannot but carry a very nauſeous idea with it: and had Mr. Pope deviated from the original, and dropt it in the Engliſh, I am perſuaded moſt people would have look'd upon it as a commendable injury to his author. I remember (z) a paſſage (of this nature, tho' leſs groſs than this) in the Iliad, which Mr. Pope has improv'd by concealing the groſſneſs of it; and in the note upon it, he ſays, *'tis unworthy of Homer; he does not ſee any colour to ſoften the meanneſs of it; it muſt ever have been too nauſeous to be deſcrib'd.*

What fine criticks ſhould we make, ſays Philypſus, ſince we can be both ſo ready to wiſh a tranſlator had err'd more frequently from his copy?——But whatever thoſe ſevere gentlemen may think, we ſhould certainly have a large party on our ſide in the preſent caſe. What would they ſay to another principle? that it may be neceſſary to deviate from the *words* of

(z) *Il.* 9, 612.

the original, to preſerve the *ſenſe* of it: and yet this may happen; as for inſtance, where our notions of things are directly contrary to what was thought of them in Homer's days.

Words are to be conſider'd, not as *ſounds*, but as they are *ſignificant*: and a ſtrict tranſlator ſhould endeavour chiefly to give us the ſame ideas which the writer he repreſents gave to his readers. It is on this account I ſhould take *(a) the monarch of the ſwains*, for inſtance, to be a juſter tranſlation of Συβώτης ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν, than the *chief ſwine-herd* would have been. In the preſent acceptation of things, a *literal tranſlation* would have been a *traveſty*: it would have made that ridiculous and mean, which was not mean or ridiculous in the original.

Of old, *uſeful* employments were alſo *honourable*. The chief courtiers were maſters of the flocks, and of the herds: a ſkill in agriculture was reckon'd a very handſome part in the character of a monarch: Homer *(b)* places it upon a level with military ſcience, and looks upon the reputation it deſerves, as equal to the glory acquir'd by atchievements in war.

To preſerve ſomething of theſe *(c)* primitive notions of things, at leaſt not to ſink into thoſe very low ideas, which we in the preſent world entertain of ſuch ſorts of arts and employments, a tranſlator of Homer is oblig'd to vary the ex-

(a) *Od.* 16, 35,—36.
(b) See Note on *Od.* 18, 412.
(c) See *Od.* 4, 974. 14, 122. and 18, 412.

preſſions in common uſe for the ſame things: nothing would be more ridiculous now, than to call a *firſt miniſter* by the name of a *hog-herd*; or to ſay of *kings*, that they overlook'd the *dairy*.

There are ſome other points, relating to the *manners* of antiquity, which may require ſome alterations in the turn of expreſſing them. I have been too tedious already; let me only mention one particular of this kind, and I have done. The heroes of old, in rating each other, are very free with the mutual terms of *dogs*, *cowards*, *villains*, &c. In the Odyſſey we have a queen calling one of her maids of honour, *an impudent bitch*; and Jupiter, if I miſtake not, pays exactly the ſame compliment to his royal conſort in the Iliad. I think no one can diſpute which is the better tranſlation in the former caſe; the new, which makes Penelope call her ſervant *(d) a loquacious inſolent*; or the literal of Hobbes:

Bold bitch, (ſaid ſhe) I know what deeds you've done.

This is equally a miſrepreſentation of fact, and ſhocking in its very ſound: it offends the ear, and makes one ſtartle at the behaviour of Penelope. A reader ought to think that lady well bred: this he cannot do, at leaſt he will be prejudic'd not to do ſo, by hearing ſuch language now, however decent it might be thought in thoſe times.

(d) *Od.* 19, 110,—91.

I am

I am oblig'd to you (ſays Antiphaus, perceiving that Philypſus ſtop'd here) for the fair account you have given of theſe lowneſſes in an *epick* poem: I know not whether your general rule of meanneſs will hold in every point, that might be mentioned; but in thoſe you have produced, it ſeems to ſquare very well. I imagine too, there is one particular, of pretty large extent in this queſtion, not yet touch'd upon. —— There may be ſeveral; but you have all that I have obſerv'd, ſays Philypſus.——I doubt not (ſays Antiphaus) you have obſerv'd the ſame thing, and put it under ſome other head. You muſt know, I would rank all thoughts which border on *puerility*, all *cold fancies*, all *forc'd antitheſes*, and any mere *turns*, and *ſporting* upon words, under the claſs of meanneſſes in an *epick* poem.——As you have hinted ſuch a variety of ſubjects, ſays Philypſus, will you not complete the favour, and afford ſome inſtances too under theſe heads?——What I can recollect (reply'd Antiphaus) is at your ſervice.

Does there not ſeem to you to be ſomething *affected* and *cold* in this thought, which I doubt not many will be apt to take for a pretty claſh in the ideas?

Here ceas'd he; but indignant tears let fall;
(e) *Spoke* when he *ceas'd*.——

(e) *Od.* 24, 504,—437.

Such is this thought;

(f) And my toſt limbs now *weary'd* into *reſt*.

Nothing is meaner than what is over-wrought: I own 'tis in poetry, as in ſtatuary; figures that are to be ſet up at ſuch a height muſt be ſomething larger than the life; but even then there are exact rules of proportion, and nothing is to appear too vaſt to the eye.

In giving one's opinion of an exquiſite ſtatue, we may ſay, it *lives* or *ſpeaks*: but when we go to refine on this, we grow affected and mean. Pardon me if I take this to be the caſe in the laſt line of this couplet:

Alive each animated frame appears;
(g) And *ſtill to live, beyond the pow'r of years.*

I was formerly pleas'd with the inſcription under a *ſaint Bruno* in Italy: but give it up now as carried too far; it tells us, as you may remember, (h) *that he is alive, and would ſpeak, were it not for the rules of ſilence he had eſtabliſh'd.* A man muſt underſtand the hiſtory of the *Grand Chartreux* to take the meaning of this; and after all, it appears too forc'd and artificial.

(f) *Od.* 10, 593,—499.
(g) *Od.* 7, 123,—94.
(h) Egli è vivo, e parlerebbe, ſe non oſſervaſſe la ragola del ſilenzio.

A fault

A fault of this kind is the more evident, when the thoughts and language look noble about it:

There terrible in arms Ulyſſes ſtood,
(*i*) And the dead ſuitors *almoſt ſwam* in blood.

You know a late excellent (*k*) philoſopher has endeavour'd to prove, that no action, which diſagrees with truth, can be good; and I ſhould not be new or ſingular in my opinion, were I to aſſert the ſame of any point in poetry. Every one knows, the dialogues of one of the moſt (*l*) penetrating criticks in the laſt age are wrote chiefly in this view. He aſſerts conſtantly, that no thought can be good, which is not poetically true; and I imagine this that he aſſerts, may be defended as eaſily in the *fictions* of poetry, as in any of the plaineſt paſſages. But ſuch an enquiry would take up more time, than criticiſm deſerves: and I mention it at preſent only as a meaſure of ſuch thoughts as are *mean* from their being *falſe*, i. e. *really beneath what they pretend to be.* —— This rule, if juſt, would be of particular ſervice in this kind of purſuits. I ſhall give you but one inſtance: when Circe mentions Ulyſſes's deſcent to the infernal ſhades, ſhe adjoins this reflection;

O ſons of woe! decreed by adverſe fates,
Alive to paſs thro' hell's eternal gates!

(*i*) *Od.* 23, 47,—51.
(*k*) Mr. *Wollaſton*.
(*l*) *Boubours*.

All ſoon or late, are doom'd that path to tread;
(*m*) More *wretched* you, *twice number'd* with the dead!

Do you not think this laſt thought has ſomething *weak* and *little* in it? According to your general rule, it fails in its *proportion*; that proportion, I mean, which every thought ſhould bear to *truth*.

If it fails in that, ſays Philypſus, I muſt allow it to be mean by my own rule; but I do not perceive in what reſpect that ſentiment is falſe.

No! ſays Antiphaus; I beg you would conſider the very word on which the whole of the reflection turns: it has plainly two ſignifications widely different. If their being *number'd with the dead*, be taken in its ſtrongeſt ſenſe, 'tis certain this did not happen twice to Ulyſſes, and his companions; if in its weaker on this occaſion, their calamity is put on a level with ſomething much more terrible and calamitous than itſelf.

Or thus: if this being *twice* number'd with the dead be intended both in the ſame ſenſe, the ſentence is directly falſe; if in very different unequal ſenſes, 'tis fallacious, and ſo falſe in its conſequence.

I beg pardon for putting on this grave face, and affecting ſuch an air of demonſtration: but you muſt know this thought is exactly the ſame in the original, or (if any thing) rather more fallacious there than in the tranſlation: in ſuch a caſe all one's gravity is ſcarce ſufficient; and

(*m*) *Od.* 12, 32,—22.

the

the ſuperſtitious perhaps would rather diſbelieve a real demonſtration, than allow of any fault in Homer. However, if they will only excuſe me for having thus aſſum'd the *chair of criticiſm* (as the nobleſt of (*n*) human writers calls it) I am very willing to deſcend, and act in an humbler ſphere.

All ſporting upon words may ſeem unbecoming of the *epick* muſe: I ſhall leave you to determine how far there may be any ſuſpicion of this in ſome particular lines.

(*o*) *Thy laſt of games unhappy haſt thou play'd*—

———to me has ſome reſemblance to the rebellious angels in Milton, where they run on in ſuch a vein of inſulting and punning. I know not how far the original might help in leading a tranſlator into the former turn, but here is another line which runs into it without that wrong biaſs:

(*p*) They on the future *banquet feaſt* their eyes.

I ſhould think it yet more improper on any grave or affecting circumſtance: do you remember the death of Antinous in the Odyſſey? 'tis in the inſtant of his lifting a goblet of wine to his mouth:

(*n*) Lord *Bacon*, *De Augm. Scient.* Lib. 6. Cap. 4.
(*o*) *Od.* 22, 32,—27.
(*p*) *Od.* 10, 205,—180.

Wretch

Wretch that he was, of unprophetick ſoul!
High in his hand he rear'd the golden bowl;
Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath,
(q) Chang'd to the deep, *the bitter draught* of death.

I fear that ſome points, which generally paſs for elegancies, are of this kind.———A caſe, which touches all readers of a little taſte very much, is, (r) *when two very different ideas are join'd to the ſame verb:* this is very frequent in Cowley, and he has been often blamed for it; as in that inſtance,

(s) Up roſe the *ſun* and *Saul.*

I know not how it is, there is ſomething agreeable in this management of words, but it is very apt to injure the *ſenſe.* A thinking (t) French author lays down a rule, which is very uſeful towards diſcovering fallacies in reaſoning; it is this: *to put the definition inſtead of the thing defin'd.* I have often try'd ſomething of this nature in poetry: if we make the experiment in the preſent caſe, and inſert the *enlarg'd meaning* inſtead of the *particular words* uſed by the poet, we ſhall generally find a fallacy in this ſort of verſe; or, at leaſt, a lameneſs in the ſenſe of it.

(q) *Od.* 22, 13,—10.
(r) *Addiſon's Miſc.* Vol. 1. p. 239. 12°.
(s) *Od.* 14, 454,—410.
(t) *Malbranche,* Search after truth, Vol. 2. p. 74.

It

It will not be any great trouble to try this in one ſingle point. The poet, ſpeaking of Telemachus's voyage, uſes this turn of expreſſion;

To diſtant Pylos hapleſs is he gone,
(u) To ſeek his father's fate, and find his own.

This ſounds very well: but what is the meaning of the word *fate*, which is of ſuch double ſervice upon this occaſion? try it in your own mind:

To diſtant Pylos hapleſs is he gone,
To ſeek (whether his father be dead or not) *and find*
——What?

There's no need of trying it, ſays Philypſus; I allow it to be deficient upon the firſt hearing: but by the way, I wonder you let the *antitheſis* in it eſcape ſo peaceably!

Indeed I am no great friend to them, reply'd Antiphaus, eſpecially when they are multiplied upon us, as in this line:

(x) *Duſt mounts* in *clouds*, and *ſweat deſcends* in *dews*.

I do not fear my Philypſus ſhould miſtake me: it would be too ſcrupulous to diſcard every antitheſis out of poetry, as it ſeems affected to run into them very often. Some are of force and

(u) *Od.* 14, 209,—180.
(x) *Od.* 11, 740,—599.

emphaſis,

emphaſis, and ſome agreeable and engaging: poſſibly, even *the double uſe of the ſame word* is not abſolutely to be rejected. But however theſe ornaments may obtain on ſome occaſions, they ſeem generally too little and artificial for the more noble parts of poetry. They are of the Ovidian kind, rather than of Homer: and are more apt to hit the taſte of ſchool-boys, than of men.

And now I have mention'd Ovid's manner, give me leave to ſay, that (in ſpite of his ſeveral beauties, and that peculiar eaſe and addreſs with which he tells a ſtory) I fear his writings are one great reaſon of the trifling manner keeping its ground ſo much in the preſent age. Ovid is generally made uſe of to initiate us on Parnaſſus. We look upon him as ſoon as ever we open our eyes to poetry: he is then, 'tis true, fit for our taſte; but the misfortune is, he is too agreeable: 'tis odds but this fondneſs grows up with us; and a falſe taſte of wit, drawn from him, may influence our writings many years after we have flung him from our boſom. The *boyiſms* of Ovid (as Dr. Garth calls 'em) are agreeable enough to infect us to old age. Mr. Dryden, for inſtance, was thus infected by 'em: Ovid, and Cowley our Engliſh Ovid, were his favourites at *ten* years old, and his corrupters at *ſeventy*.

As great genius's, and more correct writers than Mr. Dryden, may be touch'd with the ſame infection. I will give you an inſtance or two of this, with which a perſon may be pleas'd, even while he condemns 'em:

(*y*) She

(y) She to her preſent lord laments him loſt,
And views that object which ſhe wants the moſt.

Again:

His arms he ſtretch'd; his arms the touch deceive;
(z) Nor in the fond embrace, embraces give.

Any one, the leaſt acquainted with the manner of the poets, will readily perceive this to be of the Ovidian kind. It is pretty, and agreeable as Ovid; but to be ſo, it loſes ſomething from the air of Homer; it ſinks beneath that ſimplicity and nature, which is the diſtinguiſhing character of his writings.

Now you mention Mr. Dryden, and this ſort of pretty writing together, give me leave (ſays Philypſus) to commend one ſort of *turns*, which that critick (a) judges not only pretty, but really good and ſubſtantial: I will not defend all his inſtances, but I would engage to do it, were they all as good as that from (b) Virgil.—A very good critick ſince has treated of this more diſtinctly. His notions, as I remember, are, that a dextrous turn upon words, is *pretty*; the turn upon the thought, *ſubſtantial*; but the moſt *complete* of all, is when the turn of the words and of the thought concur: (c) *when both*

(y) *Od.* 19, 245,—209.
(z) *Od.* 11, 487,—391.
(a) *Dryden's* Pref. to *Juvenal*, p. 84. 8°.
(b) Ignoſcenda quidem, ſcirent ſi ignoſcere manes.
(c) *Blackwall's Introd.* to the *Claſſicks*, p. 214.

our

our reaſon and our ear are entertain'd with a noble ſentiment expreſs'd vigorouſly, and beautifully finiſh'd. I ſhould be glad to know your opinion, Antiphaus, how far a perſon might admit theſe turns in *heroick poetry?*

As for the firſt, ſays Antiphaus, I believe one might venture to ſay, that it ſhould be rejected univerſally: I am ſo little vers'd in theſe particulars, that I cannot readily ſay any thing as to the ſecond: the other (whether juſtly or not) takes one very much. I own, for my part, that I imagine them not only beautiful, but uſeful: I remember an inſtance of *(d)* one in Virgil, which fixes the images very particularly on the mind; and it is this which helps to touch us in thoſe lines of Mr. Addiſon, which ſtrike every one who reads them:

The liſt'ning ſoldier fixt in ſorrow ſtands,
Loth to obey his leader's juſt commands;
The leader grieves, by gen'rous pity ſway'd,
(e) To ſee his juſt commands ſo well obey'd.

If you aſk my opinion in this point, rude and unſettled as it is; I ſhould think, that no *turns* ſhould obtain in an *epick*, or any ſolemn poem, except ſuch as have more ſtrength than beauty: that in leſſer pieces, thoſe may be allowed which have more beauty than ſtrength: but that they can be juſtified in no piece whatever; unleſs

(*d*) *Georg.* I. 404.
(*e*) *Addiſon*, Vol. I. p. 76. 12°.

they

they have ſome ſhare of ſtrength, as well as beauty.

The great art of them is to appear unartful; as in theſe pretty lines from Mr. Philips's Paſtorals;

Fair is my flock, nor yet uncomely I,
If liquid fountains flatter not; and why
Should liquid fountains flatter us, yet ſhow
The bord'ring flow'rs leſs beauteous than they grow?

As I take it; the beauty of this paſſage is in a greater degree, than its ſtrength; and the natural air of the ſentiments is more exquiſite than either: the turn of the lines makes them obſerv'd by every reader more than they would otherwiſe be; and yet that very turn does not ſeem to be deſign'd, but rather to be the natural reſult of the ſhepherd's thoughts as he ſpeaks them.

If I have ſaid too much, Philypſus, you muſt blame yourſelf for it, who led me from my chief deſign. I was juſt entering on the ſeveral natural pieces in the poem before us.

Some fanciful writers afford us nothing but pictures and deſcriptions: they continue image after image; and put one in mind of thoſe Americans, who, when firſt they were diſcover'd, are ſaid to have us'd painting inſtead of writing.

Homer's judgment will not allow him, in any of his works, to be thus perpetual in his deſcriptions; and the deſign of the Odyſſey will not allow near the variety, which he has very juſtly employed in the Iliad. The Odyſſey is a

poetical

poetical treatiſe of morality: it does not admit of a profuſion of colours. This is not to be look'd upon as a defect: we might with the ſame reaſon blame a book of maxims, or Plato's moral dialogues, for not having all the flouriſhes and charms of rhetorick.

And as the plan of the Odyſſey in general excludes that great variety of deſcription, which abounds in ſome poems; the chief ſcene, in the remaining part of it, is ſo wholly domeſtick, that it ſcarce allows room for any thing of that nature. The action now is confin'd; it lies all between either the country-houſe of Eumæus, and the palace; or this latter, and the gardens of Laertes. What a narrow ſcene is this for deſcription? and yet theſe are the only *places* capable of any, if you except a two days journey, and a ſhort voyage in the 15th, neither of which could be enlarg'd upon without injuring the main deſign. Homer was unacquainted with the modern affluence of painting, wherever there may be any fine object in the way: as theſe opportunities offer only in an epiſode, he paſſes them with the utmoſt diſpatch: we ſee his haſte in the very lines, and indeed in every one of them diſtinctly:

With ſpeed the maſt they rear, with ſpeed unbind
The ſpacious ſheet, and ſtretch it to the wind:
Minerva calls; the ready gales obey
With rapid ſpeed to whirl them o'er the ſea:
Crunus they paſs'd; next Chalcis roll'd away——

The

The ſilver Phæa's glitt'ring rills they loſt,
(f) And ſkimm'd along by Eli's ſacred coaſt.

It might be the indigence of his ſubject this way, which induc'd Homer to repeat the view of hell in the 24th book; and the wanderings of Ulyſſes in the 23d. But nothing could make him run into deſcriptions on that occaſion. We have the names of places repeated in order; and tho' Penelope has the full relation, the reader is only tantaliz'd with hearing in general, that

(g) He images the rills, and flow'ry vales.

Theſe things, however they had been laid out, would have been only ſide-views. For in the main ſcene, as it now lies in Ithaca, I think there are but four *places* capable of deſcription. If I am not miſtaken in this, it will give us great reaſon to admire the management of Homer; who, as he was too prudent to run out into any impertinent deſcriptions; at the ſame time has not omitted any one of thoſe places, that might very well allow of a deſcription without wandering. We have diſtinct draughts of Laertes's gardens, (h) Eumæus's lodge, of (i) the *royal palace*, and the *road* between theſe and the palace. Theſe complete the preſent ſcene of the poem; and any one, by laying them toge-

(f) *Od.* 15, 319,—296.
(g) *Od.* 23, 336.
(h) *Od.* 14. ver. 8. to 26.
(i) *Od.* 17, 316 and 415.

ther,

ther, may form an exact picture of it in his mind.

Some of these have been mention'd already on other occasions, and the way from Eumæus's house to the metropolis deserves very well to be mention'd here: I dare say, you will think part of it the most delightful road you ever travell'd in your life:

Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down
The cavern'd way descending to the town,
Where, from the rock with liquid lapse distils
A limpid fount, that spread in parting rills,
Its current thence to serve the city brings,
An useful work, adorn'd by ancient kings.
Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor there
In sculptur'd stone immortaliz'd their care;
In marble urns receiv'd it from above,
And shaded with a green surrounding grove;
Where silver alders in high arches twin'd,
Drink the cool stream, and tremble to the wind.
Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen
A mossy altar, deep embow'r'd in green;
Where constant vows by travellers are made;
(k) And holy horrors solemnize the shade.

There is a sort of melancholy pleasure hangs upon the mind, where-ever we have a view of Laertes in his retirement. The good old prince

(k) *Od.* 17, ver. 230 to 245.

(l) labours

(*l*) labours thorough life; he (*m*) longs to lay down the burden: and when he is not ſo overcome with his diſtreſs, as to (*n*) neglect his employment in his gardens, he ſeems buſy rather to (*o*) avoid pain, than to enjoy pleaſure. Thus is he engag'd with ſomething of diverſion, and much of melancholy, when the ſcene changes to his gardens.

We have not a ſet deſcription of theſe altogether; but it begins at this point, and is carried on (*p*) ſucceſſively, till we may eaſily form an idea of the whole.

Tho' Homer has not wander'd into any deſcriptions of places that lay out of this ſcene of the poem, he has here, and all along in the former part of it, brought in ſhort draughts and ſide-views of things by ſuch arts, as are ſome of them neceſſary, and all very allowable in poetry.

Such are all *deſcriptive ſimilies*: wherein ſome picture out of the ſubject is borrowed to illuſtrate any point that belongs to it. This affords us ſeveral occaſional pieces, and ſome of them very natural: I have juſt dipt upon one of this ſort. 'Tis juſt after the ſlaughter of the ſuitors; they are yet gaſping, and Ulyſſes is ſurveying their bodies, to ſee whether the number be complete:

(*l*) *Od.* 15, 151.
(*m*) *Od.* 11, 226.
(*n*) *Od.* 16, 155.
(*o*) *Od.* 24, 285.
(*p*) *Od.* 24. ver. 237, 256, 268, and 395.

So

So when by hollow ſhores the fiſher train
Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,
And ſcarce the meſhy toils the copious draught [contain:
All naked of their element, and bare,
The fiſhes pant, and gaſp in thinner air;
(q) Wide o'er the ſands are ſpread the ſtiff'ning prey.

It's a known remark, that all alluſions of this kind, drawn from calm life, (as fiſhing, hunting, and rural affairs) have a peculiar beauty: and 'tis as well known, that they acquire an additional energy, when they are introduc'd amidſt any confuſion, or to illuſtrate images of terror. Virgil (r) has imitated this ſort of contraſt from a ſimile in the Iliad; which affords frequent inſtances of the ſame kind; nor are they wanting in the (s) poem before us.

The more conciſe and natural any image, the ſtronger the illuſtration. How do you approve of this, on a number of females employ'd at the loom?

———Their buſy fingers move
(t) Like poplar-leaves, when Zephyr fans the grove.

When theſe occaſional images hit in ſeveral points, they are the more deſcriptive of the

(q) *Od.* 22, 430,—387.
(r) Compare *Æn.* 2, 303. Ιλ. δ', 455.
(s) See *Od.* 12, 300. and the note there.
(t) *Od.* 7, 135,—106.

things,

things, which they are brought to illuſtrate. Homer gives us an idea of the ſpirits in *hades*, of their ſtill poſture, their motion, their confuſion, and the odd noiſes they utter, all in one ſingle picture of this kind:

Trembling the ſpectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin, hollow ſcreams, along the deep deſcent.
As in the cavern of ſome rifted den,
Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obſcene;
Cluſter'd they hang, till at ſome ſudden ſhock,
They move, and murmurs run thro' all the rock:
So cow'ring fled the ſable heaps of ghoſts,
(*u*) And ſuch a ſcream fill'd all the diſmal coaſts.

It ſeems not improper to point out theſe diſtinct likeneſſes; as the tranſlation has done in the preſent caſe, more plainly than the original; the ſame may be ſaid of (*x*) ſome others. This is done ſometimes by inſiſting much on one circumſtance, (*y*) and repeating it over and over.

Borrow'd images appear with a particular propriety and grace, when they have ſome near relation to the ſcene, on which the poem turns at the very inſtant of applying them. Thus in the *battle of rivers*, in the (*z*) Iliad, every ſimile is aquatick, and adapted to the place. Thus if the ſwiftneſs of a deity paſſing over the *land* is

(*u*) *Od.* 24, 14,—9.
(*x*) See *Od.* 5, 420,—330.
(*y*) As in Mr. Pope's *Iliad*, 22. ver. 257 to 262.
(*z*) Book 21.

to

to be illuſtrated in this manner, Homer images it by the ſwiftneſs of an *eagle:* but when Mercury is flying over the *ſea*, by that of ſome *(a) water-fowl.*

The image of an angler is us'd in the Iliad, of a perſon in the field of battle; in the *(b)* Odyſſey, of perſons at ſea; both on occaſions which make that image proper. But it ſeems more proper in the latter, from the agreement of place. In this, and all like caſes, part of the picture is nearer to us, and will be conceiv'd the more readily and clearly.

There may alſo be ſome propriety from any previous relation between the *perſon*, and the *thing* to which he is compar'd. Any faithleſs wavering creature may be compar'd to the ſea; but it ſtrikes one more, when Venus is ſaid to be as *(c) inconſtant, as the waves from whence ſhe ſprung.* Any rough man may be compar'd to this element, in another view; but there is a peculiar fitneſs in theſe lines:

A race of rugged mariners are theſe,
(d) Unpoliſh'd men, and boiſt'rous as their ſeas.

I remember, I us'd formerly to be mightily taken with an image of this kind in the *(e)*

(a) Od. 5, 64.
(b) Od. 12, 300.
(c) Guarini's *Paſtor Fido*, Act. 4. Sc. 7.
(d) Od. 7, 42.
(e) ——— Cui ſæpe ſuis in montibus hircus
Prolixam invidit barbam ——— De *Cambro-Brit.*
Thus Virgil's,
Abjetibus juvenes patriis & montibus æquos.

Muſcipula:

Muſcipula: and I believe now, it was on this very account. Ideas which have been already joined on any other occaſion, will agree the more eaſily on a new one.

The picture is leſs broken alſo, when the borrow'd image is adapted to the preſent circumſtances: where Penelope is repreſented as chaſte and beautiful, 'tis ſaid ſhe look'd *(f)* like Diana with all the charms of Venus; when her beauty is the chief circumſtance to be inſiſted on, ſhe is compar'd to *(g)* Venus, without any mention of Diana.

We may obſerve, by the way, that the heathen poets, in comparing a perſon to any of their deities, had a ſure method of giving their readers a picture of that perſon. The ſtatues of their deities were known by every one; and the faces of each as well aſcertain'd, as the faces of the Roman emperors (for inſtance) can be, by frequentiy converſing with their medals; this I take to be one reaſon, why this ſort of compariſon is ſo very frequent in the ancients: the caſe is very different in any modern compoſition; tho' we ſeem to be equally fond of the ſame compariſons.

If it does not add to the ſtrength, at leaſt it makes the piece more agreeable, when theſe images are unuſual. Thus the compariſon of Ulyſſes in his bed of leaves, to a *(h)* coal of fire preſerv'd in the embers; and before in his raſt

(*f*) *Od.* 17, 47,—37.
(*g*) *Od.* 18, 229,—192.
(*h*) *Od.* 5, 630,—488.

at ſea, to an (*i*) heap of thorns, driven by the wind.

There may be a *prettineſs*, as well as a *likeneſs* in theſe images; I always us'd to be pleas'd with that paſſage, where Penelope is compar'd to a (*k*) nightingale; tho' I am more pleas'd with the ſame image in (*l*) Virgil, which, beſide its agreeableneſs, is perhaps the moſt complete inſtance, that can be given, of ſuch ſimilitudes as hit exactly in every point. Virgil certainly excels Homer in theſe, as we may ſay that Homer excels him in the *vague ſimilitude*; for both have their diſtinct beauties.

'Tis the proper air of poetry to be unconfin'd and free: the muſe loves a flowing dreſs: her motions are ever eaſy, and her very ornaments muſt be natural. Such is the muſe of Homer. And hence the poet, in this ſort of pictures, does not in the leaſt ſcruple to take in ſeveral circumſtances, that do not affect the main reſemblance. When a painter is copying a piece, he muſt preſerve the likeneſs; but he may vary in the drapery, the poſture, the under-figures, and the ſcene around them.

Thus in Homer's Phiſomel, the main likeneſs is very well taken: when the poet has ſecur'd this, he touches upon the hiſtory of Italus; and launches out into particulars, which are (*m*) ſo far from ſquaring with the caſe of Penelope, that they have no manner of relation to it.

(*i*) *Od.* 5, 417.
(*k*) *Od.* 19, 605,—518.
(*l*) *Georg.* 4. 511.
(*m*) *Od.* τ', 523.

Homer

Homer is almoſt ſingular in another ſort of ſimile, the reverſe of the former; when the principal figures have in themſelves no likeneſs, but agree in one circumſtance of action. Theſe are very frequent in the Iliad and Odyſſey; and I cannot ſay, whether it be from a true judgment, or a ſcrupulous niceneſs, that later writers endeavour to imitate them but very rarely.

Perhaps this is blameable; and ſo may be that ſtringing of ſeveral ſimiles together, which we ſometimes meet with in Homer. I do not mean when ſeveral things are choſen to illuſtrate the (*n*) *ſame point* more fully: but when ſimiles on *different* things follow too cloſe on the neck of one another. In the *ſecond* Iliad, (*o*) we have one of theſe ſtrings, which takes up thirty lines; and tho' they are all excellently well choſen, and have one common point of union between them all, yet they may ſeem ſomething faulty, as they are too numerous for the place in which they ſtand, and too much crouded on one another.

Now I have digreſs'd ſo far on two or three vices in ancient ſimiles, I ſhall juſt mention one or two of a later date. Such is the *continued* ſimile, which is very liable to the great fault of mixt metaphors, when a writer, to lengthen a *compariſon*, carries it beyond the *likeneſs*. I remember one in the dedication prefix'd to Mr. Dryden's tranſlation of Virgil's Georgicks, that begins very well: "The greatneſs of birth

(*n*) See Ιλ. ξ', 394.
(*o*) —— β', 453 to 483.

" ſhews a nobleman with advantage; but if he " degenerates, the leaſt ſpot is viſible on er- " mine."——But grows very faulty, when 'tis endeavour'd to ſtretch it farther than it will bear. " To preſerve this whiteneſs in its ori- " ginal purity, you (my Lord) have, *like that* " *ermine, forſaken that common tract of buſineſs,* " *which is not always clean.*"

The art of extracting ſimiles out of a thing directly contrary to your purpoſe, is, I think, wholly modern. Every one knows an inſtance of this in that famous doctor, who, to illuſtrate the *danger* of the *church*, compares it to one of the *prophets*, *who was encompaſſed with horſemen and chariots of fire*——for his defence.

Nothing is ſo oppoſite to the deſign of this beauty in poetry, as to labour after a vaſt number of likeneſſes in any the minuteſt points; and to multiply them, rather to ſhew how far the poet's wit can carry the reſemblance, than to ſtrengthen the image of the things deſcrib'd. This deſcends even to playing upon words; nay ſometimes to particularize ſeveral points in which they are *unlike*, as well as thoſe in which they *agree*. This is the *Cowleian* ſimilitude: and I could produce (*p*) monſtrous inſtances of it from a very fine writer, where he endeavours only to imitate Cowley at a diſtance. 'Tis the ſame perſon who has introduc'd ſimiles into his *proſe*, in a manner unknown to the ancients: but he who would blame any of his writings of *this kind*,

(*p*) See a *Pindarick Ode* on Cowley, in Dryden's *Miſc.* Vol. 4. particularly the whole third *Stanza*.

muſt

muſt blame them, as Mr. Locke does eloquence, with the tenderneſs of a lover.

The (*q*) chief deſign of ſimiles is to make things clear: obſcurity and confuſion is their great fault: poetry may go much farther in them than proſe; but, even in poetry, none can be good, which do not give us either more diſtinct, larger notions of the thing, or at leaſt of ſome circumſtance of the thing to be deſcrib'd.

I long to add ſeveral things on this head; but I have wander'd too far already from our chief deſign: it is time now to conſider a higher claſs of deſcriptions and images, (which we touch'd upon when we were talking over the former books of the Odyſſey) that poetical power of expreſſing the *paſſions*, and even *ideas* yet in the minds of men.

I am oblig'd to you, Philypſus, for preventing much of what might have been offer'd here, when you were conſidering the ſtarts and turns, which our paſſions occaſion in the various manners of ſpeaking. I know not how ſuch a notion would appear to the world; but you have thoroughly perſuaded me, that all the figures of ſpeech, of the (*r*) nobler order, are viewed in a truer light, when we look upon them, as naturally expreſſive of what we feel within us;

(*q*) Ad inferendam rebus lucem *repertæ ſunt* ſimilitudines. —— Præcipuè cuſtodiendum, ne id quod ſimilitudinis gratiâ adſcivimus, aut obſcurum ſit, aut ignotum. *Quintil. Inſtit.* Lib. 8. Cap. 3.

(*r*) Figures either belong to the *diction*, or the *ſentiment*: the latter is what is here intended.

than when we conſider them only as the arts and machineries of writing.

It was on this occaſion you went thorough the moſt paſſionate ſcenes in the Odyſſey; for ſuch are the ſeveral interviews in which Ulyſſes makes himſelf known to his (*s*) friends, his (*t*) ſon, his (*u*) father, and his (*x*) conſort. Penelope's (*y*) ſpeech at that juncture is excellent; and indeed all her ſpeeches in general are of the *pathetick* kind, and (under this view) afford us the moſt beautiful paſſages in the whole poem.

To the many things that have been ſaid on the *double paſſions* (as you were pleas'd to let me call them) give me leave to add one particular caſe more: what I mean is *diſſimulation*. We have frequent deſcriptions of this in the Odyſſey: every inſtance of it (if paſſionate at all) will fall under this conſideration; and that in the higheſt degree, as the paſſion *aſſum'd*, and the *real*, are direct oppoſites. Every one, who only pretends to *courage*, is certainly affected with *fear*; and when we put on a falſe gaiety, the *heart* is as dull and oppreſs'd, as the *countenance* is enliven'd.

Could we look into the breaſt of one who affects a livelineſs, when his thoughts are really gloomy; we ſhould ſee his ſpirits in ſuch contrary emotions, as are deſcrib'd in the ſuitors,

(*s*) Book 21.
(*t*) Book 16.
(*u*) Book 24.
(*x*) Book 23.
(*y*) *Od.* 23, 215.

under

under thoſe unaccountable mixt fits of mirth and heavineſs———

(z) ———Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom
The ſuitors ſouls, inſenſate of their doom;
A mirthful phrenzy ſeiz'd the fated croud,
The roofs reſound with cauſeleſs laughter loud——
Then down each cheek the tears ſpontaneous flow.

Such is that (a) ſmile on the face of Penelope, which has ſomething very uneaſy in it: ſhe ſeems all the while to ſtruggle with her tears. 'Tis like a tranſient gleam of light, when the heavens are overcaſt: all around is gloomy; and the light itſelf is dim and wateriſh.

This perhaps is an inſtance, not of the affected, but the natural kind. 'Tis true, one paſſion ſometimes uſurps the effect of another: without tumbling over Des Cartes for a ſolution of the matter, we know, that an exceſs of joy often breaks out into tears; and that rage may vent itſelf in a ſmile. Theſe indeed are contrary appearances; but 'tis very different in all points of diſſimulation. The mixture then has ſomething peculiar in it. Contrary to the natural blending of ſuch emotions, this has always an air forc'd and artificial. The ſoul was not made to be a counterfeit: every time we would teach her theſe new arts, we fling her off her byaſs, and give her an unnatural motion. There will ever be ſomething aukward in the paſſions of the moſt profound diſſemblers.

(z) *Od.* 20, 419.
(a) *Od.* 18, 194, -162.

Only view Ulyſſes, when he is ſtruck to the ſoul with the affection and tears of his Penelope, and at the ſame time reſolv'd to conceal thoſe his emotions from her as much as poſſible:

(*b*) With'ring at heart to ſee the weeping fair,
His eyes look ſtern, and caſt a gloomy ſtare;
Of horn the ſtiff relentleſs balls appear,
Or globes of iron fixt in either ſphere;
Firm wiſdom interdicts the ſoft'ning tear.

Even Ulyſſes, that Ulyſſes who is ſo (*c*) celebrated among the ancients for his command over his paſſions, does not appear without ſomething forc'd and unnatural in his looks, amidſt all his diſſimulation. He can command his tears; he can command his tongue; but ſtill his very features would betray him.

I know not what to ſay to one thing: that Homer makes diſſimulation one of the greateſt excellencies of his hero. The heathen ſyſtem of morality was incomplete enough to bear with this proceeding: and even chriſtians of the greateſt name have border'd much on the ſame notions. One of our ancient writers, who was as capable as any of them to do it, has (*d*) launch'd out into a long defence of *uſeful frauds*; and Father Paul, to mention one not inferior among the moderns, reckons diſſimula-

(*b*) *Od.* 19, 247.
(*c*) See note, *ibid.*
(*d*) See Chryſoſt. Tom. 6. p. 5. Ed. *Savil.* ΦΑΡΣΕΙ, &c.

tion

tion (*e*) expreſsly among the virtues of Pope Clemens the ſeventh. I do not mention this as any argument for the thing; but to extenuate the proceeding of Homer. 'Tis no wonder that he ſhould miſtake a counterfeit virtue in the dark, which ſuch great men could not diſtinguiſh in the light.

But whatever colour diſſimulation may bear in the ſchemes of morality, it is certainly a great excellence to paint diſſimulation well in poetry. The pretended paſſion muſt appear moſt ſtrongly, and yet the real paſſion muſt appear under it. It muſt be like the drapery in pictures, which ſhews the turn of the limbs, at the ſame time that it hides them; and in particular, puts one in mind of that veil in Homer, *which ſeems, and only ſeems*, to ſhade the face of Penelope.

There is nothing more difficult in poetry, than to expreſs juſtly ideas in the minds of perſons whom we deſcribe. But tho' this be the leaſt obvious, 'tis perhaps the moſt agreeable of all ſtudies. The poet muſt ſearch carefully into the nature of man, and the working of his thoughts in general: he muſt know what emotions are natural on each accident of life; and on every ſingle occaſion is to conſider, not only the circumſtances of actions, but alſo the temper, the education, and the very *make* of the perſons concern'd in them. Theſe will alter men's views

(*e*) Where the hiſtorian ſays, that *pope* died "Con allegrezza "non mediocre della corte: la quale ben ammirava le *virtu* di "quello, che erano una gravita naturale, & eſſemplare parſi- "monia, & *diſſimulazione*; odiava però maggiormente l'ava- "ritia durezza & crudelta." *Hiſt. del Concilio Trid.* p. 68.

of the very ſame point. When Neſtor talks of atchievements in war, he will dwell chiefly upon the prudence and experience of a general; Hector will mention the great effects of ſtrength and courage; Tydeus muſt place the whole on a bold daring ſpirit, without taking the body into the account; while Polypheme, on the contrary, muſt ſpeak of nothing but the advantage of a vaſt ſize, and ſuperior ſtrength.

A man's notions of excellence are form'd generally from ſome advanc'd powers of his own. Each man is apt to make himſelf the meaſure of all the ſpecies; and his ſpecies the ſtandard of all perfection. All beings above him muſt be exactly like the ſuperior moiety of his own being, and all below him muſt be purely of the inferior. The vulgar of mankind form their heaven hereafter out of thoſe things which have pleas'd them moſt in life; and the very notions of the Deity in moſt men take a turn from their own complexions. The God of proud *tyrannical* minds is a being that delights only in the *glory of being terrible*; as with the ſoft and pitiful, the Deity is *all mercy:* the Gods of Epicurus were mere pleaſurable intelligences; and the Deities of the Irroquois are *mighty hunters.* Commend me to that philoſopher who ſaid, that *were his horſe to give us his notion in this caſe, a broad cheſt and a flowing mane, would certainly be the principal things in it.*

One cannot eaſily apprehend how general an effect this has in the actings of our minds. I know not that it is yet deſignedly managed in any ſyſtem of philoſophy (for Mr. Locke's *aſſociation* of *ideas* ſeems to be ſomething very diſtinct

diſtinct from it); and as it wants a name, give me leave to call it for the preſent, the *aſſimilation of ideas.*

If you would ſave me from a fit of philoſophizing, be ſo good as to reach that volume of the Odyſſey juſt by you, that I may read you a paſſage which ſtruck me particularly on this account. 'Tis where Ulyſſes has acquainted the Cyclops with his real name and character: this is part of the monſter's anſwer:

Oh heav'ns! oh faith of ancient prophecies!
This, Telemus, Eurymides foretold:———
Longſince he menac'd ſuch was heav'n's command,
And nam'd Ulyſſes as the deſtin'd hand.
I deem'd ſome godlike giant to behold,
Or lofty hero, haughty, brave and bold;
Not this weak pygmy wretch, of mean deſign,
(f) Who not by ſtrength ſubdu'd me, but by wine.

Even the excellence of thoſe things, with which we converſe chiefly, is apt to influence our thoughts in the ſame manner. Hence the eaſtern writers image the height and ſtateline's of any illuſtrious perſon, by *cedars:* Homer, by the *(g) Delian palm-tree*; and Virgil, by what a Britiſh reader will think the moſt noble, *a* (*h*) *large lofty oak.*

There's a paſſage which, I remember, I was mightily pleas'd with formerly, in reading Cer-

(*f*) *Od.* 9, 604,—516.
(*g*) *Od.* ζ', 163,—6, 193.
(*e*) *Æn.* 9, 682, and 12, 700.

vantes, without ſeeing any reaſon for it at that time; tho' I now imagine, that which took me in it comes under this view: ſpeaking of Don Quixote, the firſt time that adventurer came in ſight of the ocean, he expreſſes his ſentiments on this occaſion in the following manner: *He ſaw the ſea, which he had never ſeen before; and thought it much bigger than the river at Salamanca.*

This turn of thought is not ſo commonly obſerv'd perhaps as it might eaſily be in life. There are other occaſional *traces* in the mind, which are known and obvious: things that are common in ſome degree to all men; and ſuch are all thoſe apprehenſions which follow from any *maſter-paſſion*. One might expatiate here very agreeably on each of them; but I am ever apt to be too tedious; and will therefore confine my ſelf to one ſingle paſſion, that of *fear*.

We may ſee in the deſcriptions of the poets, how this paſſion acts on the ſoul through all its different degrees, from a *wavering* and *irreſolution* of mind, to the exceſs of *confuſion* and *deſpair*.

When a coward (as moſt cowards are vainglorious) undertakes any enterprize of difficulty, the moment he is engag'd in it, his mind turns all upon the danger of the undertaking. He immediately wiſhes himſelf fairly out of it; his body begins to tremble, and his thoughts are all confus'd and irreſolute. Thus it is with Dolon. That wretch engages, under the covert of the night, to ſteal to the camp of the Greeks, and diſcover their motions. Before he is got half way, the firſt tread of men that he hears, *he*

hoped

hoped in his mind (ſays (*i*) Homer) *that 'twas a meſſenger from Hector to recal him.*

The whole book, where we have this image, is nothing but one picture of fear in different poſtures: the apprehenſions of diſtant danger are very naturally expreſs'd in the Grecian guard;

——————Cautious of ſurprize,
Each voice, each motion draws their ears and eyes;
(*k*) Each ſtep of paſſing feet increas'd th' affright.

Mr. Pope ſeems to have improv'd this deſcription beyond the original, from (*l*) Virgil's Achemænides.

Any near danger has more viſible effects; the motions of a perſon, thus affected, are (*m*) broken and diſordered; his colour comes and goes; his eyes are (*n*) diſturb'd; he cannot bear to look (*o*) full on the face of his enemy: he approaches faintly, and winks even when he ſtrikes.

Fear has another ſtrange property of *magnifying* our ideas of the danger. When we are poſſeſs'd with it, we are apt, like Soſia in the play, to take every ſhadow for a man, and every man

(*i*) Ιλ. κ', 355.
(*k*) *Il.* 10, 221,—189.
(*l*) ——Vaſtos a rupe Cyclopas
Proſpicio, ſonitumque pedum, vocemque tremiſco. *Æn.* 3, 648.
(*m*) —Ex oculis ſe turbidus abſtulit.— *Æn.* 11, 814.
——————Tum pectore ſenſus
Vertuntur varii. Rutulos aſpectat & urbem,
Cunctaturque metu, telumque *inſtare tremiſcit.* 12, 916.
(*n*) Tum primum noſtri Cacum videre timentem,
Turbatumque oculis.— 8, 223.
(*o*) ——————Οὐκ ἐτάλασσας
Στήμεναι ἄντα, κατ' ὄσσα ἰδὼν δήϊον ἐν ἀντῇ,
Οὐδ' ἐθὺς μαχίσασθαι. —— Ιλ. ρ', 169.

for

for a giant. If the danger be preſent, we think it greater than it is; and to its real terrors, add a thouſand that are only imaginary. Thus the ſuitors view Ulyſſes, when he is ready to revenge himſelf upon them: their fears (p) aggravate every fierceneſs of his actions; they look upon him as more than human, as an incens'd deſtructive deity.

If I miſtake not, there's a certain great writer who calls fear, *a natural inebriation of the mind:* it ſhews every thing double. I know not what the *mythologiſts* may teach; but this, in my opinion, might account for the multiplicity of Cerberus's heads, and all the hands of Briareus.

There is ſomething very expreſſive in a thought of Virgil's, if we might take it under this view:

———Se Turni media inter millia vidit,

(q) *Hinc acies*, atque *hinc acies* aſtare Latinas.

This ſpreading of any danger in our ideas may widen ſo far as to poſſeſs the whole mind. Then it is, that it takes away all (r) power of action, even (s) of flight; it fixes (t) the eye entirely in one horrid ſtare; and even (u) ſhuts up all the ſenſes to any other object, but that of its terror and amazement. It is this exceſs of fear which,

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(p) *Od.* 24, 201, to 208.
(q) *Æn.* 9, 550.
(r) *Od.* 12, 245.
(s) *Od.* 18, 284.
(t) —— Subitus tremor occupat artus;
Diriguere oculi: tot Erinnys ſibilat hydris,
Tantaque ſe facies *aperit.*— *Æn.* 7, 448.
(u) Ὡς ἐφατ', οὐδ' ἰσάκουσε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
Ἀλλὰ παρήϊξεν, &c. ———— Ιλ. Υ', 98.
See note on *Odyſſey* 10, 295.

in

in any imminent danger, makes a perſon (*x*) think it impoſſible that he ſhould eſcape; and it remains ſo ſtrong and lively, that after he is got perfectly out of danger, he can ſcarce perſuade himſelf, but that he is ſtill in the midſt of it——

——With tim'rous awe,
From the dire ſcene th' exempted two withdraw,
Scarce ſure of life, look round, and trembling move
(*y*) To the bright altars of protector Jove.

All theſe are points which lie in common between painting and poetry; I would willingly touch upon one thing more under the ſame view: I mean, thoſe pieces in poetry, which anſwer copying in painting; and each of which is really *the picture of a picture*.

You will give me leave by *picture* here to underſtand any artificial images of things; from embroidery, emboſſing, or any other method of expreſſing nature by likeneſſes of art: and indeed 'tis of this kind, that all the pictures ſpoken of in Homer are; and, I believe, all in Virgil. At leaſt, what we call painting now, was not the painting of the Homerick ages.

It is to the honour of the art, (in this general ſenſe) that the poets, when they are copying from painting, generally exceed themſelves. I believe there is not a more maſterly piece in all Virgil's works, than his copy of Troilus. Thus the ſame hand in the images of Æneas's ſhield:

(*x*) This ſort of idea is ſtrongly expreſs'd in the Odyſſey:

Gods! ſhould the ſtern Ulyſſes riſe in might,
Thoſe gates *would ſeem too narrow* for thy flight. 18,427,—6,385.

(*y*) *Od.* 22, 417,—284.

as

as in that of Achilles, Homer has all the life and expreſſion that poetry is capable of.

In both of theſe, the poets uſe a way of ſpeaking in relation to picture, which is very ſtrong and emphatical; and which may ſhew the high notions they entertain'd of this art. They do not ſay, that the images *ſeem* to perform ſuch actions; but talk of 'em as *real life:* they ſay directly, that they move, and act, and ſpeak. The criticks, who have blam'd ſome boldneſſes of this kind, ſhew only their own (*z*) coldneſs, and want of taſte. 'Tis a figure as juſt, as it is daring: it animates the deſcription; and where the poet is (*a*) more cautious, he is leſs lively on that very account.

My want of ſkill, in this noble art, is the ſame diſadvantage in viewing theſe *poetical pictures*, as want of a proper light would be to the *real*; but with all this diſadvantage, they ſeem extremely beautiful: and I cannot reſiſt the temptation of ſetting one or two of 'em before you.

The deſign on the *ſhields* affords ſuch a variety of images exquiſitely well wrought, and diſpos'd ſo juſtly, that it would be perfectly *gothick* and *barbarous* to take them to pieces. Ignorant as I am; the (*b*) young *Romulus*, and *Remus*, and

(*z*) See Pope and Dacier on the ſhield of Achilles, *Il.* Book 18.

(*a*) Thus where Europa is ſaid

——— Terras ſpectare relictas,
Et comites clamare ſuas, tactumque vereri
Aſſilientis aquæ, timidaſque reducere plantas:

One ſhould forget it was only in *picture*, did not the poet take ſo much pains to inform us of it;

Ipſa *videbatur* terras, &c.—
—Verum taurum, freta vera *putares*. Met. 6. 107.

(*b*) See *Æn.* 8, 634.

(*c*) the

(*c*) the *genius* of the Nile, ſtrike me particularly in the one; and in the other, the (*d*) *ambuſcade* and *engagement*, the (*e*) ſtill rural *proſpect*; and (*f*) the *dance*, conſider'd as a poetical piece of painting.

To what perfection muſt embroidery have arrived in Homer's days, if its works could equal his deſcriptions of them? how full of life is (*g*) that figure in Ulyſſes's robes? and, I ſuppoſe, the *ceſtus* of Venus was of the ſame nature, in which was ———

———Ev'ry art, and ev'ry charm,
To win the wiſeſt, and the coldeſt warm:
Fond love, the gentle vow, the gay deſire,
The kind deceit, the ſtill-reviving fire,
Perſuaſive ſpeech, and more perſuaſive ſighs,
(*h*) Silence that ſpoke, and eloquence of eyes.

Hercules's belt, and the deſcription of it in the Odyſſey, was the reverſe of this. The belt itſelf, perhaps, was of a different make, anſwerable to the ſhield of Achilles; which, by the way, may intimate ſomething of an art that is now loſt, which (if you will allow me in a mere conjecture of my own) ſeems to have been a ſort of *moſaick work of different metals*; (*i*) braſs, ſtannum, ſilver, &c. intermixt with gold; (*k*) all

(*c*) *Ibid.* 711.
(*d*) See Pope's *Il.* 18, 595 to 626.
(*e*) *Ibid.* 677.
(*f*) *Il.* 18, 683.
(*g*) *Od.* 19, 268,—231.
(*h*) *Il.* 14, 252,—127.
(*i*) See Ιλ. σ', 475.
(*k*) *Ibid.* 480.

varied,

varied, and (*l*) ſhaded, ſo as to expreſs the different properties and actions of the things deſcrib'd: but whatever the materials were, the workmanſhip certainly excell'd them greatly. Any one, to be convinc'd of this, need only turn his eyes on the *Hercules* in *hades*, where

Gloomy as night he ſtands, in act to throw
The aerial arrow from the twanging bow.
Around his breaſt a wond'rous zone is roll'd,
Where woodland monſters grin in fretted gold;
There ſullen lions ſternly ſeem to roar,
The bear to growl, to foam the tuſky boar:
There war, and havock, and deſtruction ſtood;
(*m*) And vengeful murder, red with human blood.

Theſe are all copies: and I have done, if you will give me leave only to ſet Virgil's *Troilus* before you; which is certainly as fine a piece as any drawn by that great hand:

——Amiſſis Troilus armis
Infelix puer, atque impar congreſſus Achilli,
Fertur equis, curruque hæret reſupinus inani,
Lora tenens tamen: huic cervixq; comæq; trahuntur
(*n*) *Per terram, & verſâ pulvis inſcribitur haſtâ.*

How beautiful does this look in the poem and in the picture? yes, the painter and the poet have one and the ſame *art*, or rather one and the ſame *power of creating*.

Aut utramque putabis eſſe veram,
Aut utramque putabis eſſe pictam.

(*l*) *Ibid.* 549.
(*m*) *Od.* 11, 756,—608.
(*n*) *Æn.* 1, 482.

I am

I am extremely oblig'd to you (ſays Philypſus) for ſo various a view of theſe beauties. Believe me, I have ſcarce known for ſome time, whether I was not got into ſome ſtrange picture-gallery, where one meets every moment with new ſubjects of admiration and delight. The misfortune is, you have only led me thorough by the hand, and given me a tranſient view of them: when I could have dwelt hours upon admiring each by itſelf. 'Tis juſt like ſome travelling enjoyment of this kind; when we have been forc'd to run over whole apartments furniſh'd with pieces by the greateſt maſters, too numerous to be obſerv'd particularly: you have delighted me in haſte; and I know not how it is, I find myſelf pleas'd and diſſatisfy'd at the ſame time.

I am ſure, ſays Antiphaus, I have dealt with you, like the *connoiſſeurs*, which a traveller often meets with in places, where there are the beſt collections: were you left to yourſelf, you would enjoy a thouſand beauties in them; but I muſt be plaguing you all the while with pointing out the moſt particular; though after all, I know only where they ſtand, whom they were drawn by, and what they repreſent.

But we forget, Philypſus, that we are at preſent half travellers in earneſt: we are from home; and you ſee the ſun is juſt ſetting.—No,—interrupted Philypſus, we have half an hour good, at leaſt; and if you have any thing farther on this head, I beg you would favour me with it:—As you pleaſe, ſays Antiphaus.——You know, we have hitherto been viewing thoſe points in which poetry and painting agree; there is one method behind, which poetry has of impreſſing its images,

images, peculiar to itſelf.—The poet can imitate the colours of the painter; but the painter can never imitate the ſounds of poetry: you may *ſee* the hero fall in picture; but in the poem you *ſee* him fall, and *hear* the clang of his arms.

Yes, Phylipſus, there is a natural fitneſs in ſounds. Every paſſion has its diſtinct voice; each action its proper turn; and every motion a particular ſound that may correſpond to it.

Only obſerve the difference in the ſound of theſe lines; 'tis as ſenſible as that of the real ſounds, which they deſcribe: compare this couplet of Mr. Pope,

(o) Trembling the ſpectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin hollow ſcreams along the deep deſcent;

with this of the ſame hand,

———The ſtring let fly, [cry.
(p) Twang'd ſhort and ſharp, like the ſhrill ſwallow's

Thus we might (q) compare in reading Virgil ſeveral deſcriptions of rivers: There we have the full courſe of the Po, and the windings of the Tiber; the (r) largeneſs of Benacus, the (s) ſlowneſs of the Mincio, the (t) murmuring

(o) *Od.* 24, 6.
(p) *Od.* 21, 449,—411.
(q) *Unde pater Tiberinus, & unde Aniena fluenta,*
Saxoſumque ſonans Hypanis, Myſuſque Caicus. *Georg.* 4, 370.
Or theſe — *Fluvio Tiberinus amœno*
Vorticibus rapidis, & multa flavus arena
In mare prorumpit. *Æn.* 7, 32. ——— Fragoſus
Dat ſonitum ſaxis, & torto vortice torrens. *Æn.* 7, 567.
(r) *Georg.* 2, 160.
(s) *Georg.* 3, 14.
(t) *Georg.* 1, 109.

of

of a brook, and the broken (*u*) courſe of a river incumber'd with men and arms; in a word, every variety of ſtreams that can be conceiv'd, all imag'd in the various numbers and cadence of his verſe.

In poetry, the bow *twangs*; the arrow (*x*) *whizzes* through the air; and (*y*) the quiver *rattles* on the ſhoulder of the warrior; even the particular difference of the ſame ſort of actions, is to be diſtinguiſh'd in the ſound of the verſe; and the javelin, that (*z*) *flies impetuous* from Ulyſſes, *languiſhes* in the hand of the ſuitors. This very circumſtance, as I take it, is beautifully deſcribed by the tranſlator of Vida, among ſeveral other (*a*) excellent images of the ſame kind.

We do not only meet with a great variety of theſe ſignificant numbers in the Odyſſey; but are inſtructed too in the *method* of rendering our numbers proper and ſignificant. Here we are taught how the poet roughens his verſe to imitate the ſubject he is to expreſs. Thus the note tells us, that his deſcription of the ſea abounds (*b*) "with the harſheſt letter our language affords. It is clogg'd with monoſyllables, that "the concourſe of the rough ſyllables might be "more quick and cloſe in the pronunciation, "and the moſt open and ſounding vowel occur "in every word."

(*u*) *Æn.* 1, 103.
(*x*) *Od.* 21, 461.
(*y*) *Il.* 1, 64.
(*z*) *Od.* 22, 292.
(*a*) See *Pitt's Vida*, p. 108, &c.
(*b*) See note on *Od.* 12, 283.

On

On the contrary, a gentle flowing ſtream runs as eaſy and ſmoothly in the deſcription: we then hear (*c*) "nothing of thoſe rough conſonants; "inſtead of them we meet with ſeveral liquids, "and thoſe liquids are ſoften'd with a multitude "of vowels."

What a violent and ſtrong motion does Homer give to Siſyphus's ſtone in its fall?

(*d*) Αὖτις ἔπειτα πέδονδε κυλίνδετο λᾶας ἀναιδὴς.

Whence this rapidity and violence in the numbers? (*e*) If we obſerve them, we find, that "there is not one monoſyllable in the line, and "but two diſſyllables: ten of the ſyllables are "ſhort, and not one ſpondee in it, except one "that could not be avoided in the cloſe; (which perhaps too may be of ſervice towards imaging the ſtopping of its courſe at laſt) "there is no "*hiatus* or gap between word and word, no "vowels left open to retard the celerity of it:" and yet, tho' the motion be carried on with ſuch a vehemence, one ſeems to ſee the *bounding* of the ſtone, as well as the *impetuoſity* of its deſcent.

I ſhould think, (tho' the notes do not mention any thing of it) that the tranſlator expreſſes this double image in the Engliſh; when he makes the ſtone

(*f*) ——Reſulting with a bound,
Thunder impetuous down, and ſmoak along the ground.

(*c*) See note on *Od.* 14, 1.
(*d*) Οδ. λ', 597.
(*e*) See note on *Od.* 11, 736.
(*f*) *Od.* 11, 738.

At

At leaſt, in both we may ſay of the verſification, as of the ſtone it deſcribes;

Ipſa ſuis viribus ruit.

The oppoſites to theſe expreſs a ſlowneſs and difficulty of motion; when a hero ſtrains

———Some rock's huge weight to throw,
(*g*) The line too labours, and the words move ſlow.

Thus is Siſiphus deſcrib'd in the former picture;

With many a weary ſtep, and many a groan,
(*h*) Up the high hill he heaves a huge round ſtone.

Never was a tranſlator more juſt to his original: the obſervation which has been made on the Greek theſe lines anſwer, will hit equally with the (*i*) Engliſh: "The verſes are clogg'd "with long ſyllables, and with vowels open upon "one another; the very words are heavy, and, "as it were make reſiſtance in the pronuncia-"tion."

In the ſame manner Virgil and Homer deſcribe the labour of the giants, when they endeavour to ſcale heaven: (*k*) Virgil, chiefly by the open-

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(*g*) Mr. Pope's Art of *Criticiſm*.
(*h*) *Od.* 11, 736,—594.
(*i*) See note on *Od.* 11, 736.
(*k*) Ter ſunt *conati* imponere *Pelio* Oſſam
Scilicet, atque Oſſæ frondoſum involvere Olympum.
Georg. 1, 282. ſec. Ed. Ruæi.

——Ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπειλήτην, ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ
Φυλόπιδα στήσειν πολυάϊκος πολέμοιο·
Ὄσσαν ἐπ' Οὐλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ' Ὄσσῃ
Πήλιον, εἰνοσίφυλλον, ἵν' οὔρανος ἄμβατος εἴη. Οδ. λ, 315.
Heav'd on Olympus tott'ring Oſſa ſtood;
On Oſſa, Pelion nods. —— *Od.* 11, 388.

neſs

neſs of his vowels; Homer, by the reſiſtance of his ſyllables, and the pauſes of his lines; and his tranſlator, by ſlow ſyllables, burthen'd with ſeveral eliſions, cloſe upon one another.

The numbers are thus minutely adapted to the motion deſcrib'd by theſe great maſters; and we need not wonder if they obſerve like rules in points of greater concern: ſuch are all occaſions where they ſpeak the language of the paſſions; or endeavour to touch the ſoul of the reader either with pleaſure or pain.

When Homer deſcribes any terrible object, (*l*) "he rejects the more flowing and harmonious "vowels, and makes choice of ſuch mutes and "conſonants as load the ſyllables:" then long weighty ſounds, and words of many ſyllables, are proper; and often a deſign'd harſhneſs, unuſual pauſes, and a broken ſtructure in the verſe.

But the lyre muſt be new tuned, when the ſubject is agreeable or delightful. The poet then ſoftens every line (*m*) "with vowels, and the "moſt flowing ſemi-vowels: he rejects harſh "ſounds, and the colliſion of rough words:" the tone of the verſe muſt be neither ſerious nor majeſtick; but rather qualified by as great a frequency of ſhort ſyllables, as can well be admitted, without rendring the lines weak and effeminate: the cadence is ſoft and gentle. His words deſcend like a kind refreſhing ſhower; or like the ſnow that melts in falling.

(*l*) See note on *Od.* 6, 153.
(*m*) See note on *Od.* 6, 193.

The

The *joyous verſification* admits of more ſprightly notes, and a greater mixture (*n*) of energy and vigour: ſometimes ſhe riſes even to breaks, and pauſes: but they muſt be always, like thoſe in muſick, pauſes of delight; and the verſe muſt ſpring on again, when it recovers itſelf, without loſing any thing of its exultation and vivacity. ——Unleſs ſome (*o*) afflicting theme breaks in, and turns our thoughts away, to diſmal ſcenes, where ſighs and melancholy reign: the muſe, compaſſionate, ſpeaks all in tears, and moves with the ſame (*p*) ſlow melancholy air.

It is ſcarce to be imagin'd, Philypſus, how great the powers of ſounds are, when adapted to the ſubject, and the paſſion. For my part, I ſhould think that our very *bodies* are diſpos'd to receive them; that this frame of ours is like an inſtrument ready tun'd; and when the proper key is touch'd, our nerves tremble and anſwer it with a kind of muſical ſympathy. How far this may reach in others, I know not; but as for my particular make, 'tis ſtrangely ſuſceptible of ſuch impreſſions. After a period ſet to me-

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(*n*) Exulting in triumph, now riſe the bold notes.
[Mr. Pope's Ode on Muſick.

(*o*) As Virgil from the glories of Rome to the death of Marcellus, *Æn.* 6.

(*p*) Quantos ille virûm magnam Mavortis ad urbem
Campus agit gemitus! vel quæ, Tiberine, videbis
Funera, cum tumulum *præterlabere* recentem! *Æn.* 6. 874.

This *delay* alſo fixes the melancholy on one's mind; and for the ſame reaſon *repetition* ſeems to be particularly uſeful on theſe ſubjects:

——— Ut vultum vidit morientis & *ora*,
Ora modis, Anchiſiades, pallentia miris;
Ingemuit miſerans graviter. ——— *Æn.* 10, 823.

O lancholy,

lancholy, I have been ſurpriz'd to find my eyes full of tears: there are ſome exquiſite lines which I can never read without a certain *ſhivering* thorough my blood, that I cannot expreſs to you: I have felt my ſpirits burn within me, upon hearing a point of war, well wrote; and have been almoſt ready to ſtart from my ſeat at the poetical ſound of a trumpet.

This energy of ſounds, and the great and various emotions they are capable of raiſing in our breaſts, may ſerve partly to excuſe thoſe criticks, who are very particular in laying down rules, as to this part of verſification; the ancients, as well as moderns, have left us whole treatiſes upon it: and thoſe who have wrote in a more general way, are very diffuſive, when they come to this part of their ſubject. They ſpeak to every the leaſt circumſtance; and readers, who have never thought over this point, would be ſurpriz'd to find the great Cicero very induſtriouſly *ſettling quantities*, and *meaſuring words* fit for ſuch and ſuch a period. They would wonder, whence he is ſo peremptory for *iambicks* on this occaſion; and on another, ſo great a partizan for *tribrachs* and *dactyls*.

Why, ſeriouſly, ſays Philypſus, I have often thought him quite tedious on theſe particulars: the orator, even the critick, ſeem'd to be loſt ſometimes, and nothing but a mere pedant appear in their room. I admire the force of numbers (continued he) as much as any one; but when I have been reading the rules at large in the criticks, I could not help thinking them too minute and trifling. If a man muſt be taken up thus in weighing ſyllables, and ranging of vowels,

els, what elegance of language can we expect, or what life in his compoſitions?

What you ſay (anſwer'd Antiphaus) is what, I believe, moſt men think on this occaſion: and were a poet always to be ſtudying his rules, ſuch an objection would be very powerful: but it is with this, which is only the mechaniſm of verſe, as it is in the mechaniſm of writing. We muſt learn to draw the figure of the letters, and ſtudy how to form the particular turn of each, before a man can write down a whole ſentence: by uſe this knowledge grows familiar: we then write by a (*q*) ſort of inſtinct; and our pen runs over each letter, without our conſidering diſtinctly at each, which way we ſhall direct it. 'Tis much the ſame in theſe arts of verſification. When we have learnt the force of letters, and the powers of ſound; when we know what ſyllables are proper to expreſs ſuch a motion, and what run of verſe hits ſuch particular images, uſe makes the mind ready in applying what is proper; and the thought is as nimble in ſuggeſting words of a ſuitable ſound, as the hand is in motions proper to ſet down thoſe words on our paper.

But it will be half a life, perhaps, before the poet can come to this readineſs.——I do not ſay it is to be acquir'd immediately, anſwer'd Antiphaus, but acquir'd in ſome meaſure it muſt be, by any one who deſires to be a true poet: in the mean time, a man may indulge his vigour, he

(*q*) See *Quintil. Inſtit.* lib. 10. cap. 6. Eſt igitur uſus quidam irrationalis, &c. Or Mr. *Locke's Eſſay*, lib. 2. cap. 9. ſect. 9 and 10.

may compoſe his lines with full ſpirit, and ſet them to muſick afterwards: let a man write with flame, if he will but correct at leiſure.

Beſides: this is not ſo difficult to be attain'd, as one would imagine. The fitneſs of ſounds to things is natural: *invention* itſelf will go ſome way in the work; and where there is naturally (what we call) a *good ear*, nature will do the buſineſs almoſt without the help of art. I do not ſpeak this in a declamatory way, good Philypſus; I imagine fact and experience will go a great way in proving what I ſay. A man, who thinks vehemently, will ſpeak ſwiftly; and when we are on a grave point, our words will of themſelves be in a great meaſure ſlow and weighty. This is yet plainer from the *invention* of languages: how many ſingle words are there in every tongue, that have been originally caſt in a proper mould, and on the firſt heat carried off the images of things impreſs'd upon them? I was ſaying too, that the poſture of the mind at the time of compoſing, will aſſiſt the turn of the compoſition: and is this more abſurd in particular caſes, than that the temper of a people in general ſhould affect their language in the ſame manner? yet has it been often obſerved, that the diſpoſitions of a people are perceivable in that turn of words they chiefly delight in. Thus the French tongue is briſk and voluble: the Germans talk in vaſt ſyllables, and perpetual conſonants: Engliſh is neither too ſoft, nor too rough; tho' our northerly ſituation inclines us rather to the latter: and, as the Spaniard is the moſt haughty of all nations, their language is the moſt grand; it prides itſelf in firm ſyllables, in a frequency of the

the fulleſt vowel, and the moſt ſonorous terminations of its words.

Nature certainly forms us within for fit ſounds: we ſee every day, that even brutes can expreſs their paſſions by the *tone* of their voice; and is not an intelligent being as well qualified by nature to adapt ſounds to his ſentiments?

Indeed they are thus adapted already in a multitude of inſtances; our language abounds with ſuch words; and in many caſes we need only utter our ſentiments in the moſt common expreſſions, to ſpeak with this ſignificance. What was it that led the firſt inventors into this frequency of ſuch words? was it art, or the natural reſemblance, and their obviouſneſs upon that account? 'Tis in this light we muſt underſtand our maſter critick as to this point, where he calls nature (*r*) "the great original and miſtreſs of "propriety in the preſent caſe: it is ſhe that "leads us to imitate things by ſound; and to "expreſs what we conceive, by words that are "turn'd according to thoſe ſtrong likeneſſes, "which we form in our minds."

'Tis plain the uſe of words is arbitrary: we might, if we had a fancy for it, call any thing by any name: yet there is ſomething from within, that has influenced all nations ſo far, as to lead them to deſcriptive ſounds, in their giving names to things; and that more frequently than one would readily imagine. What nature has done in ſingle words, the poet carries on in compoſition; almoſt all the particular names of

(*r*) *Dion. Hal.* Περὶ Συνθέσεως, ιζ'.

ſounds themſelves, for inſtance, are naturally ſignificant in moſt languages; as with us, the *roaring* of waves, the *whiſtling* of winds, &c. Of ſuch words, aſſiſted by a proper ſtructure of quantities, and a ſignificant cadence of verſe, the poet makes an hurricane by land, or a ſtorm at ſea. Nature firſt preſided in eſtabliſhing thoſe proper ſounds, and ſtill directs in the aſſemblage of them.

Hence it is, that this point takes ſuch a compaſs in the doctrine of the criticks. Some of them, no doubt, carry the matter too far, when they would require this natural ſignificance of ſounds to be kept up in every thing we write. Such was Voſſius. It would make you ſmile to hear ſome of his fancies: he talks as if every language, like that of his favourites the Chineſe, ſhould be nothing but muſick: he would have our very actions all tuned: a ſoldier can't run the gauntlet, but he muſt be (*s*) flaſh'd *in time*; and his very (*t*) barber muſt ſhave him in a juſt proportion of *dactyls* and *ſpondees*.

Hermogenes is perhaps more trifling, tho' in a graver manner: he queſtions *whether this ſort of ſounds be not preferable to the ſentiments in a poem.* This is to oppoſe two things, that are in the ſtricteſt amity and concord. Theſe ſounds

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(*s*) The ancients (ſays he) uſed muſick in every thing; *Adeo quod ipſæ quoque plagæ ad numeros harmonicos ſontibus ingerebantur.* De viribus rythmi, p. 47.

(*t*) Non ſemel recordor me in ejuſmodi incidiſſe manus, qui quorumvis etiam *canticorum motus* ſuis imitarentur *pectinibus*; ita ut nonnunquam Iambos vel Trochæos, alias Dactylos vel Anapæſtos, nonnunquam Amphibraches aut Pæonas quàm ſcitiſſimè exprimerent; unde *haud modica oriebatur delectatio.* Ib. p. 62.

do

do not, like the modern, pretend to rival the ſenſe; their whole buſineſs is to make the ſentiments more ſtrongly perceiv'd, and more effective on the mind.

I have heard it frequently objected to thoſe gentlemen the criticks, that they find out ſeveral beauties of this kind in the works of Homer, which he never ſo much as dream'd of in compoſing 'em. In many caſes this might be true; and in many the lines may be juſtly commended, and really ſignificant, tho' that particular beauty might not be deſign'd in compoſing them: but thoſe who can perſuade themſelves, that Homer never deſign'd any ſuch thing in his writings, I ſhould think, might ſoon bring themſelves to believe, (what has been ſo frequently produc'd as an inſtance of abſurdity) that his poems might be made by chance.

The notes of muſick in a good compoſition are fitted to the ſubject; and a good copy of verſes wrote for muſick will be fitted for notes. I cannot once doubt, that the firſt ſtanza in Mr. Pope's ode for St. Cæcilia's day, has a *deſign'd* harmony all thorough it. 'Tis juſt the ſame caſe with Homer's poems: they were all made for muſick, and have been all ſung to the lyre.

As for my part, ſays Philypſus, I find muſick enough in them, even now, without the lyriſt. Neither have I any quarrel with the criticks for giving me pleaſure, and pointing out beauties of this kind, whether deſign'd by Homer or not. But I wonder at one thing: while they ſpeak of the defect in this point perpetually, I never yet heard them ſpeak of any exceſs in it: 'tis certain, that the greater number of poets err in ne-

glecting the ſignificant turn of their verſes: but is there no erring too by an affectation of it?

I thank you, (anſwer'd Antiphaus) for putting me in mind of this particular. Undoubtedly there may be faults on both ſides: even in the poem before us, I imagine, this is ſometimes carried too far, and ſometimes uſed improperly: the infirmneſs of a couplet, mention'd on another occaſion, agrees with the thing deſcrib'd, and may perhaps be blameable on that very account.

(*u*) His looſe head tott'ring, as with wine oppreſs'd,
Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breaſt.

Terrible images have ſomething engaging; and the mind takes a ſecret pleaſure even in *melancholy*: *diſagreeable* (*x*) objects alone are the worſe for being well deſcrib'd: a poet is to reject, as well as to chuſe; 'tis want of art to ſet every thing in a ſtrong light; and there are many objects, which, if they muſt have a place at all, require at leaſt to be flung into ſhades.

If this be true, there are ſome few images of this ſort, which I think are drawn too ſtrongly, or too laviſhly:

(*y*) Down dropt he groaning———
(*z*) He ſaid: chill horrors ſhook my ſhiv'ring ſoul.

(*u*) *Od.* 18, 282,—239.
(*x*) Longinus condemns a paſſage in Heſiod on this very account. *De Subl.* cap. 9.
(*y*) *Od.* 14, 473,—425.
(*z*) *Od.* 4, 725,—538.

(*a*) They

(*a*) They curſe their cumbrous pride's unwieldy [weight.

(*b*) There wallowing warm, &c.

To me the ſcreaming of the ghoſts, as deſcrib'd at the end of the *eleventh* Odyſſey, is rather *diſagreeable* than *dreadful:*

Swarms of ſpectres roſe from deepeſt hell,
With bloodleſs viſage, and with hideous yell,
They ſcream, they ſhriek; ſad groans, and diſmal ſounds,
(*c*) Stun my ſcar'd ears, and pierce hell's utmoſt bounds.

I leave this to your judgment; for it is very difficult, in theſe caſes, to diſcern the *true* from the *faulty*. A *harſhneſs* of ſounds is often proper and ſignificant; but when and how far, is a knot that I will not pretend to untie.

I beg leave to repeat a paſſage from the Iliad, in which ſome of the lines may be ſtrain'd too much, under this notion of rendering them ſignificant:

Firſt march the heavy mules, ſecurely ſlow,
O'er hills, o'er dales, o'er crags, o'er rocks they go:
Jumping, high o'er the ſhrubs, of the rough ground,
Rattle the clatt'ring cars, and the ſhockt axles bound.
But when arriv'd on Ida's ſpreading woods,
(Fair Ida, water'd with deſcending floods)

(*a*) *Od.* 1, 214,—165.
(*b*) *Od.* 4, 547,—405.
(*c*) *Od.* 11, 782,—632.

Loud ſounds the axe, redoubling ſtrokes on ſtrokes;
On all ſides round the foreſt hurls her oaks;
Headlong deep-echoing groan the thickets brown;
(*d*) Then ruſtling, crackling, craſhing, thunder down.

This laſt verſe in particular may be an inſtance of employing deſcriptive ſounds too thick upon one another; but this, if it be a fault, is ſuch an one as in the preſent ſtate of poetry, requires an unuſual eminence in the writer, to be capable of committing it.

'Tis much more frequent among our poets to neglect the ſentiments in their verſification; to give up the ſignificant ſtructure of words, for mere harmony and ſoftneſs of verſe; and even to make uſe of numbers contrary to the image or paſſion they are deſcribing; tho' to deſcribe actions of rapidity, for inſtance, in ſlow ſolemn meaſures, is as abſurd, as for an actor to ſcold, or rant, with the tone and ſteadineſs of a philoſopher.

We have not time, Philypſus, otherwiſe I ſhould have ventur'd on ſome farther faults of our verſification: but I muſt not now run out into complaints on the frequent *conſonants*, and frequent *eliſions*, multiplied ſo much in our verſes, tho' both ought to be particularly guarded againſt, in a language naturally overladen with them:— on the neglect of *meaſure*, and taking all ſyllables, whether long or ſhort, to be of equal time; and the lameneſs and inequality from

(*d*) *Il.* 23. 147—120.

hence

hence in verſes of the ſame kind:—the diſcord of the *emphaſis* or accent, and of the *pauſes*:—the repeated *cadence*, and continued *likeneſs* of ſound. I need only mention ſome other identities of ſound, as all middle and double rhymes, and all that are alike for two couplets together. And methinks, Philypſus, as all theſe likeneſſes of ſound would be given up at the firſt word, unleſs there be ſome particular reaſon for retaining that faſhionable jingle at the cloſe of our verſes, we may even reckon that as bad as the reſt. I ſhould have ſaid ſomething on this: but 'tis no great matter; ſince it ſtands condemn'd over and over by the greateſt criticks among the modern. For my part, I'll talk no more of it, that we may go in humour to our claret.——I begin to wiſh myſelf in your parlour. The evening ſhuts in apace. Come, good Philypſus, let us be going, I beſeech you.

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FINIS.

TO

Mr. *SPENCE*,

ON HIS

ESSAY

ON

Mr. *Pope*'s ODYSSEY.

'TIS done——Reſtor'd by thy immortal pen,
The critic's noble name revives again;
Once more that *great*, that *injur'd* name we ſee
Shine forth alike in ADDISON and Thee.

Like curs, *our* critics haunt the poet's feaſt,
And feed on ſcraps refus'd by every gueſt;
From the old * Thracian dog they learn'd the way
To ſnarl in *want*, and grumble o'er their *prey*.
As tho' they grudg'd themſelves the joys they feel,
Vex'd to be charm'd, and pleas'd againſt their will.
Such their inverted taſte, that we expect
For faults their thanks, for beauties their neglect;

* Zoilus, ſo called by the ancients.

So the fell ſnake rejects the fragrant *flow'rs*,
But ev'ry *poyſon* of the field devours.

Like bold Longinus of immortal fame,
You read *your* poet with a poet's flame;
With *his*, *your* generous raptures ſtill aſpire;
The *critic* kindles, when the bard's on fire.
But when ſome lame, ſome limping *line* demands
The friendly ſuccour of your healing hands;
The feather of your pen drops balm around,
And plays, and tickles, while it cures the wound.

While POPE's immortal labour we ſurvey,
We ſtand all dazzled with exceſs of day,
Blind with the glorious blaze;——to vulgar ſight
'Twas one bright maſs of undiſtinguiſh'd light;
But, like the tow'ring eagle, *you* alone
Diſcern'd the *ſpots* and *ſplendors* of the *ſun*.

To point out faults, yet never to offend
To play the *critic*, yet preſerve the *friend*;
A life well ſpent, that never loſt a day;
An eaſy ſpirit, innocently gay;
A ſtrict integrity, devoid of art;
The ſweeteſt manners, and ſincereſt heart;
A ſoul, where depth of *ſenſe*, and *fancy* meet;
A *judgment* brighten'd by the beams of *wit*,
Were ever yours;——be what *you* were before,
Be ſtill yourſelf; the world can aſk no more.